

May 21, 2019  
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, May 21, 2019 at 19:25 hours.

### Members present:

Shelley Foster, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children, Chair  
Sue Lawton, Trustee, Vice-Chair  
Nicole Buckett, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada  
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter  
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter  
Michelle Lewis, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch  
Kathy McDonald, Trustee  
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region  
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario  
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter  
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living

### Members absent: (apologies received)

Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario  
John Marchant, Trustee  
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired  
Mary Wright, Down Syndrome Association of Peel

### Also present:

April Bello, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel  
Stan Cameron, Chair of the Board  
Will Davies, Trustee  
Rosy Devi, Peel Elementary Occasional Teachers

### Administration:

Joy Uniac, Superintendent, Social/Emotional Learning and Early Years (Executive Back-up Member)  
Poleen Grewal, Associate Director, Instructional and Equity Support Services  
Peter Joshua, Director of Education  
  
Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

**1. Approval of Agenda**

Chair Foster welcomed Joy Uniac, Superintendent of Social/Emotional Learning and Early Years, in the absence of Shawn Moynihan. Chair Foster spoke positively about the Neurodiversity Project Performance Special Presentation by students of Chinguacousy Secondary School, held earlier in the Mississauga Room.

Item 7.1, Letter from Shelley Foster, SEAC Chair, Peel District School Board to the Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson, was circulated.

SE-46, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the agenda, as amended, be approved.

..... carried  
2/3rds' majority

**2. Conflict of Interest**

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

**3. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, April 16, 2019**

SE-47, moved by Sue Lawton, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of April 16, 2019, be approved.

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**4. Notices of Motion and Petitions**

There were no notices of motion or petitions.

**5. Letter from Shelley Foster, SEAC Chair, Peel District School Board, to the Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson**

The letter was reviewed and a trustee spoke positively on it. Shelley Foster will arrange to send the letter to the Minister.

SE-48, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that the Letter from Shelley Foster, SEAC Chair of Peel District School Board, to the Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson, be received.

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**6. Motion re Discontinuing the Use of the Matrix and Improving the Gifted Identification and Placement Process**

The mover of the motion, Barbara Cyr, expressed her intention to revise the Notice of Motion which she had submitted at the April 16, 2019 SEAC meeting. A handout with the revised motion was circulated and read.

SE-49, moved by Barbara Cyr, that:

Whereas, during the June 5, 2012 Supplementary meeting of the Board, regarding the current gifted identification criteria, staff stated that, "the proposed changes will improve gifted education and all students in Peel are given every opportunity to be successful";

Whereas, during the May 15, 2012 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, it was clarified that when programs are implemented and do not have the intended impact, revisions are always considered to better suit and support students;

Whereas, the introduction of the 2012 criteria has had the following impact:

1. The number of identified gifted students in the Peel District School Board has fallen to 0.8%, a greater than 50% reduction – the gifted student population has fallen to the 4<sup>th</sup> largest special education population in Peel District School Board, while province-wide it is 2<sup>nd</sup>,
2. Gifted girls continue to be under identified,
3. The current process takes too long to identify and provide appropriate programs, as seen by the number of Intermediate Enhanced Learning Classes available for the 2018/2019 school year, the majority of students are not being brought to an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee until Grades 6 or 7,
4. Disproportionately fewer gifted students come from low income families as seen in the Peel District School Board Poverty Indicator, February 2018;

Whereas, the criteria (Matrix) predetermines whether or not the student is identified as gifted and the placement that will be offered;

Whereas, a September 24, 2001, Ontario Special Education Tribunal, in its decision noted that, "a single factor should not be used to identify a child similarly, one factor alone is insufficient to rule out giftedness in a child", and a February 12, 2007, Ontario Special Education Tribunal commented in its decision that, "Identification, Placement, and Review Committee decisions must always be made with a focus on the strength, needs and best interests of the student";

Whereas, gifted students who are not achieving at their predicted ability, as measured by an IQ test, are at greater risk for social or emotional problems than other students. The most common component of the various definitions of underachievement in gifted students involves identifying a discrepancy between ability and achievement (Baum, Renzulli, & Hebert, 1995a; Butler-Por, 1987; Dowdall & Colangelo, 1982; Emerick, 1992; Redding, 1990; Rimm, 1997a; Supplee, 1990; Whitmore, 1980; Wolfle, 1991);

**6. Motion re Discontinuing the Use of the Matrix and Improving the Gifted Identification and Placement Process (Continued)**

Whereas, at the Supplementary Meeting of the Board, June 5, 2012, Superintendent of Special Education stated that, "schools will continue to nominate students to write the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test before grade 4", and the Peel District School Board Gifted Literature Review, 2009 states; "giftedness can be observed in the first three years of life. Rapid progression through the developmental milestones during these three years should be taken seriously, as evidence of giftedness. Although Silverman agrees that children and adults can be assessed for giftedness at any age, the ideal time frame for testing is between the ages of 5 and 8 years. After 9 years of age, gifted children may hit the ceiling of tests, and gifted girls may be socialized to hide their abilities. Regardless, it is believed that early identification of giftedness is as essential as early intervention in order to promote optimal development (Silverman 2007)";

Be it resolved, that the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Peel DSB recommends that the Board:

- 1) Examine how each criterion can be used as a part of an overall holistic decision-making process, that formally includes parent input, in the identification and placement of students and bring back a recommendation to the September 2019 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Peel District School Board,
- 2) Explore the rationale and process for nominating students for gifted identification and programs before Grade 4 and bring back a recommendation to the November 2019 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Peel District School Board,
- 3) Develop an action plan for addressing self-identified groups currently underrepresented in students with a Gifted exceptionality and bring back a recommendation to the December 2019 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Peel District School Board.

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Background information on the Gifted Review and the process for identifying gifted students were circulated. Barbara Cyr noted that she and Superintendent Moynihan had emailed these documents to SEAC members prior to the meeting. Vice-Chair Lawton thanked Barbara Cyr for her research and work done in support of the Gifted review. The administration responded to questions and comments from members, which included: training for teachers administering the Gifted Rating Scale (GRS) to overcome possible biases; measures to ensure that the GRS rating is justified; teacher's understanding of the process involved. Trustees speaking in support of the motion stated that the motion will help to balance inequities and check the efficacy of the process for identifying gifted students.

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**7. Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent of Social and Emotional Learning and Early Years, Joy Uniac, reported that this year, she and Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Shawn Moynihan have successfully worked together to assist special education students' needs. She advised that Early Years is an inclusive program and much of the work is about behaviour exceptionalities. She thanked SEAC members for their work in supporting students with special needs.

SE-50, moved by Ann Smith, that the Superintendent's oral report, be received.

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**8. Budget Priorities Summary**

Superintendent Uniac recalled group discussions held at the last SEAC meeting. She referred to the list of special education priorities outlined in the report and invited input on specific priorities to be considered. Suggestions included: increase in Teaching Assistants, Behaviour Teaching Assistants, and Behaviour Teachers; Transitional Resource Consultant; support for mental health; Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) training for teachers and administrators. Sue Lawton will communicate the requests to the Budget Development Committee for consideration and Joy Uniac will apprise Finance staff. Director of Education, Peter Joshua, explained the budget process. He advised that the technical paper is still awaited from the Ministry and expected this week. It was noted that a public consultation process was also undertaken and that the Board is required to submit a balanced budget to the Ministry.

SE-51, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that the report re Budget Priorities Summary, be received.

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**9. Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule 2019-2020**

SE-52, moved by Carol Oitment, that the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule for 2019-2020, be received.

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**10. Special Equipment Amount (SEA)**

Michelle Anderson, Coordinating Principal, Special Programs – SEA invited the SEA team Resource Teachers, Casimir McKeown, Reena Taeput, Gina Luongo, Daniel Fata, Jay Bara, Andrew Samatas, and Trevor Ormerod, to present updates on Assistive Technology.

**10. Special Equipment Amount (SEA) (Continued)**

Using PowerPoint slides, the presenters advised that this year 1,203 SEA applications have been approved through the new digital application system called SEAIT. Coaching supports for technology training include one-on-one student training, and resource teachers to support classroom teachers. The new SEAIT system has improved efficiency resulting in quicker approvals, and allows students to receive equipment and training in a timely manner. The pilot project for equity was focused on primary and junior classes, with goals to provide additional technological support and adopt a variety of learning tools. A mathematics pilot project was conducted collaboratively between Curriculum and Instruction and Special Education Support Services, in Communication (COM) Classes of two elementary schools, to build a deeper understanding of the student profile, support teachers in mathematics strategies and tools, and to raise awareness of a variety of assistive technology learning tools. Students' work was displayed on slides and the impacts on teaching and learning were described. Presenters spoke about the importance of Coding which can develop problem solving skills and logical thinking, promote mathematical reasoning, encourage collaboration, and improve educational equity and inclusion by finding ways to teach coding in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) classrooms.

Responses to questions and comments from members included: that parents are made aware of SEA funding at parent conferences, parent nights, school councils, through resource teachers and psychological recommendations; students are offered assistive technology when it is identified as a need; recommendations can be made by in-house psychologists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, family doctors, or private psychological assessments; with the new online application, approval of equipment can be processed in one day and equipment is usually received within a week or two.

SE-53, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the report re Special Equipment Amount, be received.

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**11. Follow Up from Accessibility Plan Status Report 2018**

The report was reviewed. It was noted that Jennifer Knight has confirmed by email, her interest in being a member of the working group. The Chair called for nominations to the Working Group.

Kathy McDonald nominated Jennifer Knight.  
Barbara Cyr nominated Carol Ogilvie.  
Sue Lawton nominated Shelley Foster.

SE-54, moved by Sue Lawton, that the report re Follow Up from Accessibility Plan Status Report 2018, be received.

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## 12. Communications

SE-55, moved by Michelle Lewis, that the following communication items be received:

1. Letter from Sylvie A. Landry, Manoushka Aimable and Benoit Fortin, Conseil Scolaire Viamonde to Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson
2. Letter from Tracy Lynn Atkinson, SEAC Chair, Bluewater District School Board to Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson
3. Letter from Richard Carter, SEAC Chair, Toronto District School Board to Minister of Education, Lisa M. Thompson
4. Letter from Valerie Adamo, SEAC Chair, Durham Catholic District School Board to Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson
5. Letter from Eva Kyriakides, SEAC Chair, Durham District School Board to Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson and Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Christine Elliott
6. Letter from Theresa Sanders, SEAC Chair, Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board to Minister of Education, Lisa M. Thompson
7. Letter from Rob Kirwan, SEAC Chair, Ottawa-Carlton District School Board to SEAC Chair Colleagues and Letter from Lynn Scott, Chair, Board of Trustees, Ottawa-Carlton District School Board to Minister of Education , Lisa M. Thompson and Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
8. Letter from Stan Cameron, Chair, Peel District School Board to Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson

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## 13. Reports from Representatives on Councils and Associations

Barbara Cyr referred to the request for a table cloth, and noted that a potential offer has been received from the Parent Involvement Committee for approximately \$750, for a custom made table cloth.

## 14. Question Period

Carol Ogilvie advised that the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has online videos on Training for Accessible Education for students. The online link will be provided to SEAC members. Chair Foster spoke about the importance of students with special needs being made aware of their basic human rights and how they can be supported.

Shelley Foster spoke positively about the SEA presentation, the importance of arts in the lives of students with special needs, and the role technology can play.

**15. Public Question Period**

There were no questions.

**16. Adjournment**

SE-56, moved by Sue Lawton, that the meeting adjourn (20:45 hours).

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