

June 18, 2019
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, June 18, 2019 at 19:05 hours.

Members present:

Sue Lawton, Trustee, Vice-Chair
Nicole Buckett, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter
Michelle Lewis, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch
John Marchant, Trustee (19:15)
Kathy McDonald, Trustee
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired (19:45)
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Mary Wright, Down Syndrome Association of Peel (19:10)

Members absent:

Shelley Foster, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children, Chair
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter

Also present:

Marilyn Bruton, Peel Elementary Occasional Teachers
Stan Cameron, Chair of the Board

Administration:

Shawn Moynihan, Superintendent of Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)
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

Marina Amin, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

In the absence of Chair Foster, Vice-Chair Lawton chaired the meeting.

SE-57, moved by Ann Smith, that the agenda be approved.

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2. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

3. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, May 21, 2019

SE-58, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of May 21, 2019, be approved.

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4. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Shawn Moynihan, stated that this is the Committee's last meeting for the 2018-2019 school year. He thanked staff for their dedication and commitment to students with special needs, and expressed appreciation for the suggestions, questions, and sharing of information from members to help better support the students and families in Peel. He advised that a working team has been struck to collaborate with members regarding reports being brought forward for information regarding accessibility. Shawn Moynihan recalled discussion at an earlier meeting with respect to tracking and supporting students who are on a modified day schedule, and he acknowledged the need to better track that information, and explain to students and families about informed consent around modified and full day attendance. He reported on working with the Board's Human Rights Commissioner to develop a form and process which is currently being tested. The form will be brought to a future meeting to help members better inform their communities on the process for a modified day schedule. Superintendent Moynihan outlined work plans that will include equity and inclusion, the decision-making process of the Identification, Placement and Review Committee and In-School Review Committee, and the SEAC recommendations that were approved at the Regular Meeting of the Board on May 28, 2019. Vice-Chair, Sue Lawton, thanked Superintendent Moynihan for his diligent work and leadership, and the interest and care he has shown this past year.

Responding to a trustee's questions, Shawn Moynihan indicated that staff will be working over the summer on responses to the SEAC recommendations that will include clarifying information regarding the IPRC process. He also indicated that equity of program will be addressed in the proposed secondary review.

SE-59, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the Superintendent's oral report, be received.

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5. Whole Student Approach to Learning - Whaley's Corners Public School

Superintendent Moynihan welcomed Shannon Green, Principal of Whaley's Corners Public School, and her staff to the meeting. Shannon Green introduced the presenters, Teacher Librarian, Kate Sharp, and Special Education Teachers, Sharon Bhagwandin and Cynthia Kelly. Cynthia Kelly stated that the presentation will highlight how the whole student approach to learning is applied, and its impact on student learning. Describing feedback based assessments, Kate Sharp, highlighted the positive effect of grade-less reports and meaningful comments which promote encouragement, a commitment to improve, a reduction in bullying and competitiveness. She reported on improved performance and feelings of inclusion from students with an Individual Education Plan. It was noted that students were able to identify their own areas of challenge and self-advocate. Sharon Bhagwandin reported on a collaborative and inclusive approach where all students feel comfortable to ask for support. Details were provided about the use of software to address gaps in numeracy and literacy learning. It was noted that, prior to implementing the whole student approach to learning, an assessment study of reading skills was undertaken, which involved reading with each child from Grades 1-7, to determine individual need that would inform guided instruction.

The administration responded to trustees' questions of clarification including: grade marks are provided on report cards, as legislated, and parents can ask to view marks at any time; the focus is on providing feedback to students and opportunities to improve; the school has a success criteria and teachers are committed to the whole student approach to learning; assessment study of reading skills took approximately three to four continuous weeks to complete. In response to a question about supporting students with developmental disabilities, Principal Green stated that for children with a diagnosis, improvement is relative, and any step towards progress is to be celebrated. She indicated that Teacher Assistant support is available, and plans are put in place to best support the student in the classroom. Superintendent Moynihan added that, in coordination with the In-School Support Program, the student is being supported by more than one teacher.

SE-60, moved by John Marchant, that the report re Whole Student Approach to Learning - Whaley's Corners Public School, be received.

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6. We Welcome the World Presentation

A handout entitled Special Education Flow – Supporting Students with Special Needs, was circulated. Superintendent Moynihan introduced Louise Clayton, Coordinator, We Welcome the World (WWTW) Centres, and invited her to share information about the work being done at the centres.

(Continued overleaf)

6. We Welcome the World Presentation (Continued)

Using a slide presentation, Louise Clayton reported that the Board operates WWTW Centres at Brampton, Malton and Mississauga, with a staff comprising supervisors, settlement workers, resource teachers, occasional teachers, office assistants, and a Multicultural Settlement and Educational Partnerships facilitator who also administers the World of Welcome orientation program in secondary schools. She stated that services are provided to students who are new to Canada (K – Grade 12), including students transferring from another school board, or private school, international visa and exchange students, and Section 23 students. Louise Clayton described the orientation process, assessment of student learning needs, and family needs. She advised that a Settlement Plan is developed for each family with referrals to various agencies and supports that include employment counselling, trauma counselling, and dental screening. Reviewing statistical data, Louise Clayton highlighted 7929 student registrations in 2018, and an increased number of secondary and elementary student assessments. She commented on the rising refugee population entering Peel, who may not have immediate access to medical services, including a medical diagnosis. Referring to the handout circulated earlier, Louise Clayton described the process, developed in collaboration with special education staff, for supporting students with special needs, with and without a documented diagnosis. Services would include help in regards to obtaining assistive devices, receiving a medical service, connecting with staff to arrange a home visit to ensure the necessary tools are in place for the student to succeed, etc. Louise Clayton spoke about the screener developed in-house for teachers to use during student need assessments, and she highlighted the importance of staff training so as to ensure that families are served in the best possible manner.

Responding to a trustee's question, Louise Clayton commented on the long wait list to access resources for trauma counselling, and noted the lack of Arabic speaking support. Chief Social Worker, Jim Van Buskirk, advised that the Board has recently hired an Arabic speaking social worker in addition to social workers who speak Spanish. He clarified that these social workers are not site specific, but available to all schools.

SE-61, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the We Welcome the World Presentation, be received.

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7. Special Education Plan 2019-2020 - Draft

Superintendent Moynihan indicated that the report includes revisions to the Special Education Plan that would have been made as a result of some changes to contained classes. He highlighted Ministry requirement to update the Special Education Plan each year and share with the Special Education Advisory Committee. Shawn Moynihan advised that the report outlines the realigned superintendencies for the 2019-2020 school year.

A member commented that the number of Developmental Disabilities (DD) classes appear to be increasing. She stated her opinion that students with Developmental Disabilities belong in a regular class setting where they can learn from other children, and expressed the hope that integration into a regular class setting will be considered in the future.

7. Special Education Plan 2019-2020 – Draft (Continued)

SE-62, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the Draft Special Education Plan 2019-2020, be received.

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8. Planning to Support Students with Special Education Needs in Secondary School

A handout entitled Secondary Special Education Supports and Services was circulated. Reviewing information in the report, Special Education and Guidance Teacher, Sharon Cook advised that new classes have been created under the Autism Spectrum Disorder Resource Program for students transferring from Grade 8 to Grade 9, as well as for students with DD, in order to address the rising number of children with complex medical needs. She reported on the Enhanced Learning Program, itinerant services, credit-granting learning strategies, monitor support, specialized service in a small class setting using assistive technology, workplace courses and hands-on learning geared towards directing students to the workplace. Coordinating Principal, Crissa Hill, reported that the change in class size will be implemented over four years; however, the class size for the next school year will remain the same. She noted that the net impact will mean a reduction in the number and variety of optional credits available to students. Crissa Hill clarified that optional credits are driven by the majority of student choice. She stated that summer and night school classes will continue for students to obtain optional credits, and she highlighted the Board's focus on ensuring that all schools continue to offer high engagement and specialty courses for students.

Responding to a member's question, Crissa Hill commented on the high attrition rate for French courses, and noted increased interest in courses such as Mathematics, Science, and English. She indicated that, should there be adequate interest, French can be offered at Continuing Education sites. Another member commented that all special needs students may not be able to access programs at Continuing Education sites. Associate Director of Instructional and Equity Support Services, Poleen Grewal, advised that the changes indicated above are a result of funding changes made by the government, and decisions regarding course offerings are made at the school level in the best interest of all students. With respect to offering French credits at school, Associate Director Grewal clarified that schools would prefer to offer functional pathways for children who need them.

SE-63, moved by Jennifer Knight, that the report re Planning to Support Students with Special Education Needs in Secondary School, be received.

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9. Communications

SE-64, moved by Carol Oitment, that the following communication items be received:

1. Letter from Bob Brush, Chair, District School Board Ontario North East, to Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson
2. Letter from Christine Dragojlovich, SEAC Co-Chair, Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic DSB, to Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson
3. Moving on Mental Health - Peel Region's Lead Agency Progress Report, Spring 2019
4. Letter from Eva Kyriakides, SEAC Chair, Durham DSB, to Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson
5. Letter from Cathy Abraham, President, Ontario Public School Boards' Association, to Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Christine Elliott and Ontario Autism Consultations, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
6. 2019-2020 Education Funding - A Guide to the Special Education Grant
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In regard to Item 9.6, 2019-2020 Education Funding – A Guide to the Special Education Grant, a member referred to the footnote in the Table of Contents, and commented that some of the proposals are not yet in effect.
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SE-64 carried

10. Reports from Representatives on Councils and Associations

Barbara Cyr expressed appreciation that the SEAC recommendations brought forward to the Regular Meeting of the Board on May 28, 2019, were accepted.

11. Question Period

Wes McDonald referred to the Draft Special Education Plan for 2019-2020 (Item 7 of these minutes), and he asked for clarity on the number of itinerant teacher allocations for visually impaired students in elementary and secondary programs. Superintendent Moynihan will provide members with a breakdown of itinerant supports for elementary and secondary programs.

Carol Ogilvie asked for an update on the budget, and whether there are plans for SEAC to apply for multi-disciplinary supports. Superintendent Moynihan clarified that multi-disciplinary funds are being used to support professional staff for intensive behaviour classes. Associate Director Grewal advised that the budget is being presented to the Board on June 19, 2019, and an update report can be provided to SEAC after the Board meeting.

Vice-Chair Lawton thanked staff and Committee members for their work and support all through the year.

12. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

13. Adjournment

SE-65, moved by Kathy McDonald that the meeting adjourn (20:50 hours).

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