

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Peel District School Board, held in the Inglewood Room, the H. J. A. Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street, Mississauga, Ontario on Tuesday, November 19, 2019 at 19:05 hours.

Members present:

Shelley Foster, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children, Chair
Nicole Buckett, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region
Carol Oitment, Conditional Additional Member
Sinthusha Panchalingam, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch
Fauzia Reza, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Mary Wright, Down Syndrome Association of Peel

Members absent: (apologies received)

Jennifer Knight, East Seals Ontario
Sue Lawton, Trustee, Vice-Chair
John Marchant, Trustee
Kathy McDonald, Trustee
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter

Also present:

Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario (Alternate Member)

Administration:

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

Marina Amin, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

SE-91, moved by Mary Wright, that the agenda be approved.

..... carried

2. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

3. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, October 15, 2019

SE-92, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of October 15, 2019, be approved.

..... carried

4. Notices of Motion

Carol Ogilvie submitted the following Notice of Motion:

“Whereas, during the October 19, 2016, Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, request was moved and carried for the Special Education Advisory Committee that an Accessibility update report be included for the month of September for the SEAC Annual Calendar Draft – 2016-2017 Agenda and Goals;

Whereas, as a follow-up to Response of Administration to Former Questions, regarding Submission of Accessibility Report in September, that the question about an accessibility report will be forwarded to the Human Resources Support Services;

Whereas, it was noted that the committee has not met in a while;

Whereas, the 5-Year Accessibility Plan has not been updated since December 2017;

Whereas, during the May 15, 2018, Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, an update on the report was requested;

Whereas, a presentation of the plan was to have been scheduled for either June or September 2018;

Whereas, it was noted that there have been no meetings and there was clarification that the community aspect of the Committee was disbanded due to changes in structure;

Whereas, it was confirmed that the Accessibility Plan is now being handled by the Human Resources and Facilities departments, and that the report will be brought back;

Whereas, during the June 12, 2018 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, an Accessibility Report update was provided to SEAC;

Whereas, it was advised that the Accessibility Plan for the next 3-5 years will be updated in terms of compliance;

Whereas, a review will be done on library resources and barriers to accessibility in schools, and individual requests are provided for on need basis, such as books in Braille;

4. Notices of Motion and Petitions (Continued)

Whereas, an updated Plan was to have been made available in late September 2018;

Whereas, during the September 17, 2018, Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, it was requested that the Accessibility Plan 2018 be included in the SEAC Annual Calendar Draft;

Whereas, during the October 16, 2018, Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, SEAC received an update on the Accessibility Plan;

Whereas, the Board met the deadline of December 31, 2017 to file the accessibility compliance report and that the next date is December 31, 2019;

Whereas, staff are preparing an updated Accessibility Plan Status Report which will be presented in March 2020 to the Special Education Advisory Committee;

Whereas, during the March 5, 2019 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, SEAC received an Accessibility Plan Status Update – 2018;

Whereas, arising from a member's comment, there was interest expressed to discuss having SEAC representation on the Accessibility Consultation Team;

Whereas, during the May 21, 2019 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, it was recommended that the working group be comprised of various participants which includes three members from SEAC;

Whereas, SEAC determined the three members through nominations;

Whereas, the Accessibility Consultation Team met September 11, 2019 and November 5, 2019 in which the SEAC representatives expressed concern regarding the auditing and validation of the Accessibility Plan;

Be it resolved that, the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Peel District School Board recommends to the Board:

1. That, staff update the 5-Year Accessibility Plan in consultation with members of the Accessibility working committee in order to conduct sound auditing of the plan against the compliance;
2. That, staff engage the Special Education Advisory Committee regarding the review of the 5-Year Accessibility Plan in order to provide input and acceptance.”

4. Notices of Motion and Petitions (Continued)

Carol Ogilvie submitted the following Notice of Motion:

“Whereas, during the October 28, 2015 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, regarding the Terms of Reference – Special Education Advisory Committee 2015-2016, it was advised that some of the Special Education Advisory Committee members had met on September 11, 2015 to discuss revisions of the Terms of Reference;

Whereas, it was noted that SEAC is a legislated Committee of the Board, and trustee members of SEAC need to be involved and included in the informal discussions;

Whereas, regarding the request for a summary of action items to be included in the minutes, it was explained that the SEAC minutes are prepared in accordance with the Board format and consistent with the minutes of other Committees of the Board;

Whereas, it was commended that the idea of having a summary report, and it was proposed that following each SEAC meeting, the Superintendent along with special education staff and SEAC members prepare a chart which can be shared with members through the Chair and Vice-Chair of SEAC;

Whereas, it was moved that the draft revised Terms of Reference-Special Education Advisory Committee 2015-2016, be brought back to the next SEAC meeting for further discussion, before it is recommended to the Board for approval;

Whereas, the recommendation was carried;

Whereas, during the November 17, 2015 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, that item 9.3, Terms of Reference – Special Education Advisory Committee 2015-2016, was withdrawn from the agenda, and was to have been brought back to a future meeting;

Whereas, during May 16, 2017, Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, there was an inquiry of whether there will be an opportunity next month (June 2017), to review the plan for SEAC's upcoming meeting items, tracking of issues, service orientation and review, in order to create a plan for the new school year and receive input from the larger community;

Whereas, the response that there would be follow-up;

Whereas, during the June 13, 2017 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, through the Superintendent's Report, it was indicated that the Superintendent has been noting the questions and issues raised during SEAC meetings and brings forth responses or reports on these matters;

Whereas, be it noted that no further discussions have been scheduled or discussed at the SEAC meetings;

Whereas, Committee members have been receiving questions from the public of what SEAC has been doing or accomplishing;

4. Notices of Motion and Petitions (Continued)

Whereas, in order to answer the public's questions, it is best to have an action and motion logs that are made public;

Be it resolved that, the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Peel District School Board recommends to the Board:

1. That staff review including in the agenda, an Action Log retroactive to September 17, 2019;
2. That staff review including in the agenda, a Motion Log retroactive to September 17, 2019;
3. That staff review including in the minutes, an Action Log retroactive to September 17, 2019;
4. That staff review including in the minutes, a Motion Log retroactive to September 17, 2019."

5. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Shawn Moynihan, reminded members that November is the month for acknowledging the significant contribution of Teaching Assistants. Superintendent Moynihan recalled having advised SEAC about his ongoing meetings with the Accessibility Working Group, and he stated that the Human Rights Commissioner is in the process of collating the information gathered through meetings with staff regarding their various duties. Shawn Moynihan advised that the report for the secondary gifted program review will be brought to the Steering Committee tomorrow and to SEAC in December 2019. He noted that the review will begin in January 2020 for pathways other than college and university. Participation of three SEAC members to sit on the Steering Committee will be invited at the December meeting. In regards to follow-up from previous meetings, Superintendent Moynihan stated that Janet Jackowski, Principal at Sheridan Park Public School is leading the work, in consultation with the Association for Bright Children Peel Chapter, to develop an input form for collecting data from parents for the psycho-educational assessment process.

SE-93, moved by Mary Wright, that the Superintendent's oral report, be received.

..... carried

6. Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) 2018-2019 Results for Students with Special Education Needs (Excluding Gifted)

The EQAO 2018-2019 results report for students with special education needs (excluding identified gifted students) was circulated. Superintendent Moynihan advised that an electronic version of the report was sent to members earlier. He expressed concerns about the results and committed to working with members to determine supports and needs that will improve performance. He suggested working in smaller groups, along with staff from Curriculum and Special Education departments, to study the results in greater detail. Reviewing the report, Superintendent Moynihan noted that the results for special needs students were below the province across almost all assessments, except in junior division mathematics, where Peel students scored higher than the province. He stated that results for OSSLT and Grade 9 applied mathematics remained relatively stable, whereas results for Grade 9 academic mathematics increased by 9% in one year. In regards to the results for students receiving assistive technology accommodations, Superintendent Moynihan expressed the need for the data to be reviewed more closely, as there are concerns about data recorded on the level of participation. In response to a request from a member, Shawn Moynihan will arrange to have the data broken down by exceptionality, including gifted.

SE-94, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the report re Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) 2018-2019 Results for Students with Special Education Needs (Excluding Gifted, be received.

..... carried

7. Ministry of Education Assessment Project

Senior Psychologist, Archie Kwan, reported that in January 2019 the Ministry of Education announced funding to school boards to support students with special needs who required professional assessments. He stated that the Peel DSB received approximately \$607,192 for this purpose, and the Special Education Support Services leadership team decided and implemented actions that included data gathering specific to psychology waitlist information. He noted that, as a result, assessments were prioritized for students in need. Overall, 405 psychology assessments were completed, of which 68% were to identify gifted students, 17% were completed for students in special programs (Autism Spectrum Disorder and Developmental Disabilities) and 15% were completed in schools requiring additional services, of which 68 were in the North Field Office, and 46 were in the Mississauga Field Office. Archie Kwan reported on additional funding through the trustees in the amount of \$500,000 for this year. He stated that the leadership team has established direction and priorities for 2019-2020, including funds to build capacity for risk assessments in the area of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, and he invited SEAC members to forward suggestions for priorities for this year. Responding to a member's question of clarification, Superintendent Moynihan advised that, as done last year, the Social Vulnerability Index will be taken into consideration for the provision of services to schools.

SE-95, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the report re Ministry of Education Assessment Project, be received.

..... carried

8. Safety Plan

Copies of a sample of the Safety Plan and Safety Plan FAQ were circulated. Superintendent Moynihan reported on the Safety Plan requirement under the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education resource entitled Workplace Violence in Schools: A Guide to the Law. He noted that the Safety Plan has been revised to make it more collaborative, to include all professional voices, as well as parent input. Providing background information, Staff Development Coordinator, Nora Green, reported that in June 2010, the Occupational Health and Safety Act included provisions for employers to develop a policy for workplace violence. In January 2016, through the bargaining process, the provincial group on Health and Safety established provisions to enhance the working and learning environment and to streamline process for reporting and protecting all school board workers. She noted that, last year, the Ministry of Education required school boards to implement an online reporting system for violent incidents for the 2018-2019 school year, which was launched in Peel in June 2018. Questions from the Safety Plan FAQ circulated earlier were reviewed and it was noted that an online safety plan allows for improved communication, mobilization of resources, quick access by professional staff and faster response time. PSSP staff at the Board level are available to support school staff in creating the safety plan. Nora Green advised that all TAs and BTAs are equipped with techniques to protect students and themselves, and that requirements for student specific training has been increasing over the years. She clarified that holding skills are for students who could potentially harm themselves, and that staff are trained in the use of Alternative Learning Environments (ALEs). There is also a positive behavior intervention plan, which is an additional plan for schools to have an alternative to address behaviour that poses potential risk to the student or staff.

Responding to members' questions of clarification, Nora Green clarified that parent perspective and collaboration is essential and valuable, and that the student voice will be part of the data collection process. The conversion to electronic data collection allows staff to respond and initiate a safety plan much faster. Superintendent Moynihan added that the online format has helped cut down the amount of student non-participation time for lack of having a safety plan. In regards to ensuring accountability before an incident happens, Nora Green advised that the emergency management binder would identify the students requiring a safety plan, and that binder would be available with all staff who are working in the classroom and directly responsible for the students. Superintendent Moynihan indicated that work has been done to ensure that a process is in place to fulfill the requirements of constant supervision of a student in the de-escalation room, and as stipulated in the ALE guidelines, to contact the parent, and reassess student need in ten minute intervals. He stated that the item regarding ALE rooms will be on the agenda for discussion at the December meeting.

SE-96, moved by Fauzia Reza, that the report re Safety Plan, be received.

..... carried

9. Nominating Students for Gifted Identification and Programs before Grade 4

Shawn Moynihan introduced Tracy Bardell, Elementary Coordinator, Archie Kwan, Senior Psychologist, and Paul Favaro, Chief Research Officer. Reviewing the report Tracy Bardell provided information on Peel’s current process for nominating students for gifted identification and programs before Grade 4. She stated that the rationality and process for changing the grade level for formal nomination was explored and it was found that any change in the process should be considered after the impact of the following factors are reviewed. These factors include: impact of changes regarding parent input into gifted identification before Grade 4; impact of movement to a different version of Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT) which allows accommodations for students with special education needs and English Language Learners; impact of prioritizing gifted assessments; impact of similar school board’s practice of gifted identification and programs before Grade 4. Paul Favaro delivered background information and an overview of the CCAT 7, which included revised accommodations and the positive impact of those accommodations. It was noted that additional flexibility with the exemptions allows for a valid assessment of the student. While acknowledging some limitations in the testing, regarding non-use of assistive technology or math manipulatives, Paul Favaro highlighted the fact that, apart from standardized testing, the student’s learning profile and day-to-day work is also taken into consideration during an assessment. Shawn Moynihan indicated that it will be helpful to review and compare the data available in Peel along with the results of children identified through gifted process at a similar school board, and to bring back a report early next year to the Committee.

SE-97, moved by Fauzia Reza, that the report re Nominating Students for Gifted Identification and Programs before Grade 4, be received.

..... carried

10. Letter from Peel DSB Chair, Stan Cameron to Carol Oitment re her Appointment as a Conditional Additional Member of Peel DSB’s Special Education Advisory Committee

SE-98, moved by Ann Smith, that the Letter from Peel DSB Chair, Stan Cameron to Carol Oitment re her Appointment as a Conditional Additional Member of Peel DSB’s Special Education Advisory Committee, be received.

..... carried

11. Letter from Debra Carson, Vice-President, Patient Care Services, Trillium Health Partners to Shawn Moynihan and Parents or Guardians

SE-99, moved by Fauzia Reza, that the Letter from Debra Carson, Vice-President, Patient Care Services, Trillium Health Partners to Shawn Moynihan and Parents or Guardians, be received.

..... carried

12. Letter from Alison Morse, Past Chair, Provincial Parent Associations Advisory Committee (PAAC) to Chair of Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

SE-100, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the Letter from Alison Morse, Past Chair, Provincial Parent Associations Advisory Committee (PAAC) to Chair of Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), be received.

..... carried

13. Reports from Representatives on Councils/Associations

Carol Ogilvie reported that the Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region (LDAPR) winter schedule is available. There is a fundraiser taking place at Boston Pizza Erin Mills on December 3, 2019 and 10% of the proceeds go to LDAPR. She also advised that LDAPR will be making a presentation at the February 2020 SEAC meeting.

14. Question Period

Carol Ogilvie reported that Parent Reaching Out (PRO) grant funding has been reduced to \$1.25 million, and there is no longer a mechanism for individual school councils or organizations to apply for the funding. She asked whether the Board has developed a policy on the distribution of the designated PRO grant funds.

Carol Ogilvie indicated that People for Education (P4E) has released a report on access to mental health support for students. Some of the findings include a decline in access to psychologists, as well as substantial regional disparities in access to social workers, and child and youth supports. She queried how the mental health supports provided by the Board compare to the P4E report findings. Shawn Moynihan will bring back a report.

15. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

16. Adjournment

SE-101, moved by Mary Wright that the meeting adjourn (21:00 hours).

..... carried

..... Chair Secretary