

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, January 21, 2020 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Sue Lawton, Trustee, Vice-Chair
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
John Marchant, Trustee (19:15)
Kathy McDonald, Trustee (20:25)
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Sinthusha Panchalingam, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter (19:05)
Fauzia Reza, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Mary Wright, Down Syndrome Association of Peel (19:05)

Members absent: (apologies received marked*)

Nicole Buckett, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada
Shelley Foster, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children, Chair*
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired

Also present:

Shireen Gul, Peel Elementary Occasional Teachers

Administration:

Shawn Moynihan, Superintendent of Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)
Poleen Grewal, Association Director of Instructional and Equity Support Services
Marina Amin, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

In the absence of Chair Foster, Vice-Chair Lawton chaired the meeting. She wished members a happy new year.

SE-15, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the agenda be approved.

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** Notes: At the February 18, 2020 SEAC meeting, Carol Oitment noted that she represents Tourette Canada.

2. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

3. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, December 17, 2019

SE-16, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of December 17, 2019, be approved.

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4. Notices of Motion

There were no notices of motion.

5. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Shawn Moynihan, circulated his report to members. Commenting positively on the successful Parent Information Nights for Kindergarten registrations, he thanked members, trustees and staff for their support. He reported on the communication that was disseminated to families regarding process for Individual Education Plans, Elementary Term One Report Cards, Kindergarten - Communication of Learning, and Secondary Semester One Report Cards, during the elementary and secondary teachers' legal job actions. Superintendent Moynihan stated that, as always, families can contact the teacher to learn of their child's progress. In regard to the Accessibility Working Group, he indicated that members will receive invitations to meet in the next couple of weeks. He also advised that the administration is reviewing SEAC's recommendations that were approved by the Board on January 13, 2020. Shawn Moynihan recalled information shared in his January 2019 report to SEAC about plans to address the concerns about exclusions of special needs students from school, and he described the work done since then, including implementation of an Operating Procedure on Exclusion, creating support documents and providing training to staff. Additionally, a tracking form has been created, which was shared with members at an earlier meeting, and an approval process established for students who are absent by mutual consent. Shawn Moynihan reviewed statistical data on student absence by mutual consent, and he noted that, at this time, there are fewer than ten students who are excluded. Responding to a question of clarification, he indicated that there will be a second iteration of the tracking form which will take into consideration children who are unable to attend school because medical supports are not available to them. In regard to other exceptionalities that are too low to report publically, he confirmed that aggregated data can be brought back.

SE-17, moved by Ann Smith, that the Superintendent's Report, be received.

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6. Autism Funding Sources – Ontario Autism Program (OAP) Childhood Budget, Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities Program (ACSD), Special Services at Home (SSAH)

Superintendent Moynihan welcomed and introduced Ben Bukuru, Service Navigator, Autism Ontario. Reviewing the presentation, Ben Bukuru described the procedures for families entering the Ontario Autism Program, those waiting for service, and families currently in service. He noted that waitlisted families will receive an invitation to apply for interim funding between January 1 and March 31, 2020, and he provided details about maximum funding amounts payable to eligible families, the funding application process and required documentation to be submitted. Ben Bukuru described the Childhood Budget form, and outlined the benefits and challenges of receiving direct funding, or choosing the option for funds to be transferred directly to the service provider. He reviewed the types of expenses that are eligible and ineligible under the Childhood Budget assistance program, and he highlighted the importance of managing and tracking expenses, as the Ministry requires that an expense form is submitted one month prior to the funding renewal date. Ben Bukuru shared information about other autism funding options for children with severe disabilities and special services at home. He noted that Autism Ontario offers to help families find supports and resources, including opportunities to attend webinars, connect with service providers and partners, etc.

SE-18, moved by Mary Wright, that the report re Autism Funding Sources – Ontario Autism Program (OAP) Childhood Budget, Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities Program (ACSD), Special Services at Home (SSAH), be received.

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7. Data Reporting OnSIS 2019

With a slide presentation, Superintendent Moynihan reviewed information on the number of students supported by Special Education Support Services, and he highlighted the increasing number of non-identified students with special needs that are supported through the special education grant. Reviewing data by exceptionality, he noted a decline over the past seven years in the number of students with a Behavioural diagnosis, and explained the increase in the number of students with ASD during 2016-2017 as a result of a consolidated effort to support all students with diagnoses and identifications, as well as the number of Gifted students, with the additional funding for assessment received at the time. He spoke of the rise in Development Disability statistics, and in regards to Language Impairment, explained that a number of students are being supported with Individual Education Plans in the absence of an identification. Shawn Moynihan stated that the drop in number of Gifted students in 2019 is a result of the revised Gifted Rating Scale which has impacted the level of identification. He reviewed data on non-identified and identified students in the In-School Enhanced Learning Program, and identified Gifted in contained classrooms. A member spoke about the under-identification of girls in the Gifted program, and another member queried the criteria for identification. Superintendent Moynihan acknowledged the need for a more holistic approach to the identification process, in view of the gender discrepancies noticed. In response to a query, Chief Psychologist, Jack Kamrad, provided details of the revised criteria for identification of children with a learning disability included in Ministry of Education Policy Program Memorandum 8 issued in August 2014.

7. Data Reporting OnSIS 2019 (Continued)

SE-19, moved by John Marchant, that the report re Data Reporting OnSIS 2019, be received.

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8. Mental Health Presentation

Superintendent of Leadership Development and School Support Services, Lawrence De Maeyer, provided background information on the Board's Mental Health (MH) Strategy, which began in 2012. He reported on the significant work undertaken to create resources and learning for staff regarding mental health supports for students, including an awareness and understanding of mental health and wellness, and mental illness. Superintendent De Maeyer indicated that the Ministry had provided funding during 2018-2019 to hire a mental health clinician to implement the MH Strategy within the Board, following which the new Mental Health Resource Team was formed. Psycho-educational Consultant and Student Well-Being Coordinator, Valerie Anderson, presented details about the work being done in Peel to support student well-being. She outlined the action plan priorities of the 3-year Mental Health Strategy 2017-2020, which includes Suicide Intervention and Post Prevention (SIPP), building resilience, collaboration and creating mentally healthy classrooms. Highlighting the importance of awareness, and early supports and training to children, Valerie Anderson described the levels of supports provided within the Aligned and Integrated Model (AIM), and the work of the MH Resource Team in schools, Board offices, and in the community. She reported on the Yes for Mental Health Team in secondary schools, and plans to form a Youth Advisory for Mental Health, working with students having dual diagnoses, children with different cultural backgrounds, and students facing mental health challenges as a result of race issues experienced at school. She also provided information from the report regarding the resources and partnerships developed to promote and support mental health and well-being.

Responding to a member's question of clarification, the administration advised that supports and resources are provided to all children. Acknowledging that the work is complex, Superintendent Moynihan explained that efforts are being made to enhance in-school support, in regards to the In-School Review Committee (ISRC), the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) and development of the Individual Education Plan (IEP). He highlighted the work being done by social workers, psycho-educational consultants, and speech-language pathologists to develop 360° profiles for students with challenges. He also clarified that a social worker or psycho-educational consultant will provide immediate assistance in an emergency situation and that, if the situation is complex, the mental health resource team will assist. In response to a query as to how Tier 1 supports are applicable to children with special needs, Valerie Anderson, described strategies to address some special needs, and advised that additional resources more specific to different needs are continuously explored. Associate Director Grewal clarified that as research is one of the components of the MH Well-Being Initiative, the team will also be engaged in data collection. Further queries included: delivering SafeTALK to high school students; Peel's student trustees can engage with students regarding accessing the resources.

8. Mental Health Presentation (Continued)

Responding to a question about implementing the strategy in elementary schools, Superintendent De Maeyer, explained that funding provided is for secondary schools. He clarified that social workers and psycho-educational consultants at the school are already providing supports as required. He spoke about plans to extend services in middle schools, and expressed the hope that the Ministry will acknowledge this need by providing additional funds to expand the Mental Health Resource Team. In response to a query about the impact of racism on students, Valerie Anderson described the work being undertaken to support student well-being. Associate Director Grewal explained that, a few years ago, work was completed to address mental health in a culturally responsive way, and that a report needs to be brought back. She stated that the secondary school student census data indicates that 83% of students in Peel are racialized, and upon analysis of the data and the information on bullying, an anti-oppression/anti-racism framework can be developed. A member asked about the composition of the MH Resource Team. The administration acknowledged the need for a broader representation of cultures and indicated that the Human Resources department is working on strategies to ensure that the Board is representative of the communities served.

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Fauzia Reza, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter, retired from the meeting (21:10 hours)

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SE-20, moved by John Marchant that the meeting continue beyond 21:30 hours.

carried
2/3rds' majority

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Responding to a member's request to report back regarding plans to support children with special needs, Superintendent De Maeyer stated that, as staff delve deeper into an analysis of the strategy, consideration will be given to finding the appropriate supports for the diverse student population.

SE-21, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that the Mental Health Presentation report, be received.

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9. Letter from Eva Kyriakides, Chair of SEAC, Durham DSB, to the Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce

SE-22, moved by Mary Wright, that the Letter from Eva Kyriakides, Chair of SEAC, Durham DSB, to the Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, be received.

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10. Letter re Appointment of Tourette Canada to the Peel DSB's Special Education Advisory Committee

SE-23, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the Letter from Peel DSB Approving the Appointment of Tourette Canada to the Peel DSB's Special Education Advisory Committee, to the Local Association and the Members who have been appointed, be received.

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11. Question Period

Carol Ogilvie asked about SEAC's recommendation regarding Activity and Motion Logs. Superintendent Moynihan responded that the minutes will be in a format as specified in the motion.

12. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

13. Adjournment

SE-24, moved by John Marchant, that the meeting adjourn (21:35 hours).

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** Notes: At the February 18, 2020 SEAC meeting, Carol Ogilvy noted that she had asked about SEAC's recommendation regarding Action and Motion Logs.