

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, February 18, 2020 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Shelley Foster, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children, Chair*
Sue Lawton, Trustee, Vice-Chair
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
John Marchant, Trustee
Kathy McDonald, Trustee
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region
Carol Oitment, Tourette Canada
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter
Mary Wright, Down Syndrome Association of Peel

Members absent: (apologies received marked*)

Nicole Buckett, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada*
Michelle Lewis, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch*
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living*

Also present:

Carol Alexander – Peel Elementary Occasional Teachers
Hilary Campbell, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel
Will Davies, Trustee
Lindsay Freedman, Peel Elementary Teachers Local
Nadia Goode, Peel Elementary Teachers Local
Sadia Shoaib, Easter Seals Ontario (Alternate Member)

Administration:

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

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

Item 9.4, Special Presentation by Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region, was added to the agenda.

1. Approval of Agenda (Continued)

SE-25, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the agenda, as amended, be approved.

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2/3rds' majority

2. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

3. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, January 21, 2020

Referring to the minutes, Carol Oitment noted that she represents Tourette Canada, and Carol Ogilvie stated that during Question Period she had asked about SEAC's recommendation regarding Action and Motion Logs. The minutes will be amended.

SE-26, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of January 21, 2020, as amended, be approved.

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

4. Notices of Motion

There were no notices of motion.

5. Special Education Classes to Support Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Shawn Moynihan stated that, for the rest of the year the Program Review section on the agenda will be used to provide updated information on special education classes. He invited Katina Paleologos, Coordinating Principal of Special Programs, to present information on support for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Katina Paleologos spoke about the importance of understanding students with autism. She described the diagnostic criteria for ASD involving impaired social communication and restricted, repetitive, and stereo typical behaviours. She stated that there are a total of 2,837 ASD students, of which 787 are in 80 ASD programs and 2050 students in mainstream placements. She provided information regarding ASD in Peel DSB, regarding: staffing supports in special programs and placement options for students with ASD; elementary and secondary communication; itinerant service placement, caseload and responsibilities of itinerant teachers; programs available and program locations across Peel. Katina Paleologos highlighted that ASD is the fastest growing exceptionality within Peel DSB, the majority of students with autism are in mainstream placements, and that there is an under representation of ASD students in Board data. She reviewed the special programs staffing chart, which includes 17 itinerant teachers, and the list of additional staff consisting of teaching assistants, ABA facilitators, speech-language pathologists, transition facilitators, occupational therapists, and a psychology consultant.

5. Special Education Classes to Support Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (Continued)

Placement options available for students who go through the IPRC process in both elementary and secondary panels were explained. Circulating a handout, Katina Paleologos reviewed the percentage of students supported by the Autism team, noting that 13% of students were in ASD elementary classes, 17% in ASD secondary classes, 42% in itinerant service, and 28% were non-identified. The chart indicating percentage for all students with autism in Peel showed students with developmental disability at 16%, autism 59%, general learning disability 1%, non-identified 23%, and communication and enhanced learning classes at less than 1%.

Responses to questions of clarification from members included that: the Student Information System does not provide a way for tracking students with multiple exceptionalities; selection of program locations is based on transportation and space available; some parents may choose not to identify their children but still retain an IEP; for students with ASD who are not identified by a parent, the school waits till a diagnosis is made and follow up on next steps with the parent; average class size for ASD students is tracked over the years. A trustee inquired about the variance in number of programs between elementary and secondary in the north and south and asked whether some elementary students in Brampton are moved to Mississauga programs at secondary level. Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Shawn Moynihan, offered to bring back a response to the trustee. In response to a query on the number of non-identified students who are later identified, it was agreed to bring back information over a 3-year period, to the March 2020 SEAC meeting.

SE-27, moved by Sue Lawton, that the report re Special Education Classes to Support Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, be received.

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6. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Shawn Moynihan, invited members to email him suggestions and agenda topics for the next couple of months. He advised that Associate Director of Instructional and Equity Support Services, Poleen Grewal, was working on the action and motion log, however she is absent today and the plan is to bring it to the next meeting.

Superintendent Moynihan reported that due to ongoing sanctions with regard to annual reviews and IPRCs, a contingency planning group has been established and a report was sent to school principals regarding changes and impacts related to IPRCs resulting from job sanctions. He stated that some of the work that involves IPRCs has been sanctioned, resulting in IPRCs being postponed, however, urgent IPRC matters will be addressed immediately by central staff if the need arises. Shawn Moynihan advised that: annual reviews will continue at Applewood and Parkholme Schools, but will not continue for students in Grades 8 – 9; profile reviews will continue for Kindergarten to Grade 7 students; beginning March 2, 2020, profile reviews will continue for Grade 8 students. Principals have been directed to coordinate with Shawn Moynihan in case of urgent need of an IPRC meeting.

6. Superintendent's Report (Continued)

Superintendent Moynihan will email detailed information to SEAC members to be used as a reference. He responded to members' questions of clarification with regard to transition meetings, regional IPRCs, annual reviews for secondary students, and students going into contained classes.

SE-28, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the Superintendent's Report (oral), be received.

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7. Student Independence Form

Craig Cooper, Coordinating Principal, Advancing Equity and Inclusion, provided background information on the previously used Student Needs Assessment Form (SNAF) and the current Student Information Form (SIF) which uses an asset-based approach. The SIF was introduced following an equity and inclusion study on teaching assistants staffing practices in special education. Referring to the above mentioned forms, and the Independence Rubric Form Descriptor Tool, Craig Cooper pointed out the differences in the two forms. He reviewed the timeline for the study work done between 2016 and 2019 which involved an equity and inclusion study, action plan, establishment of a steering committee with SEAC representation, SNAF review, and collaboration with special programs' coordinators. Highlighting the transition to SIF between June and December 2019, he advised that the draft Independence Rubric was shared with the Steering Committee, the Rubric was created in the Student Information System, and information sessions were offered to itinerants. Craig Cooper stated that in the first half of 2020 there will be an on-going collection of feedback and data from the Peel system, and a review and revision will take place in Fall 2020.

The administration responded to questions of clarification with regard to access to personal health information contained in the SIF, privacy, informed consent by parent/guardian, consent limited to a specific period of time, specific warnings to staff accessing personal information, tracking of staff who access health records. Craig Cooper advised that some health information is required on the Plan of Care, which is reviewed annually. Shawn Moynihan offered to look into the privacy aspect to ensure that appropriate consent and privacy rules are applied. Further questions of clarification were responded to regarding regular review of the SIF, parent involvement, reports by type of program, allocation of teaching assistants, opportunities for students with physical disabilities to move forward, indication of wheelchair and communication devices, review of terminology such as 'non-participatory'. A member raised a concern that students with physical disabilities are not represented in the SIF. Craig Cooper offered to have a discussion with the member to receive her input regarding the form.

SE-29, moved by Jennifer Knight, that the report re Student Independence Form, be received.

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8. Consultation re Revision of Special Education Support Services (SESS) Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Operating Procedure SESS 3

Kelly Kawabe, Principal of Terry Fox Public School, referred to the Operating Procedure for Identification, Placement and Review Committee, SESS 3, which is currently being revised. She acknowledged the leadership of Superintendent Moynihan in applying consistency of practice and philosophy to make the document more inclusive. She spoke of the need for parent engagement in IPRCs. Kelly Kawabe referred to the Parent's Guide to IPRC brochure provided in the agenda package, and circulated a handout with questions for members to engage in small group discussions and provide feedback in terms of: important elements to be captured regarding parent engagement; key elements to be included in the Parent IPRC Brochure; role of community advocates attending IPRC; advice to parents participating in IPRCs over telephone or video conferencing. Following the group discussions, Superintendent Moynihan advised that a draft report will be brought to the SEAC meeting in March 2020.

SE-30, moved by Mary Wright, that the report re Consultation re Revision of Special Education Support Services (SESS) Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Operating Procedure SESS 3, be received.

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Trustee McDonald retired from the meeting (21:00 hours).

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9. Special Presentation – Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region (LDAPR)

Circulating a handout of PowerPoint slides, Maria Reolin, Executive Director of Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region, stated that all of the 13 Learning Disability Association chapters in Ontario share the same vision and mandate but function independently. She advised that LDAPR, which is not government-funded, relies on sponsors such as the United Way, and offers individual and group programs providing academic support, behaviour and social skills, reading supports, psycho-educational assessments, summer camps, etc.

Maria Reolin stated that 10% of school population has a diagnosed or undiagnosed learning disability (LD) and 35% of students with LDs drop out of school. She reviewed the definition of learning disability and a chart showing the composition of students with LD. She advised that hearing and vision impairments, intellectual disabilities, socio-economic factors, cultural differences, lack of proficiency in language instruction, lack of motivation and gaps in school attendance are not factors in learning disabilities. Maria Reolin provided information on types of LDs, common signs of LDs, reading achievement, elements of reading hierarchy, essential literacy components, facts of LDs, and strategies for students with LD. She advised that psycho-educational assessments used to diagnose LD are expensive, however, LDAPR does not require a person to have a diagnosis done, a letter of recommendation from a teacher or a doctor will suffice.

9. Special Presentation – Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region (LDAPR)
(Continued)

Maria Reolin advised that a learning disability cannot be cured and children need to be taught strategies to cope with their disability. She described three types of help provided: specific skill instruction; development of self-advocacy skills; appropriate accommodations. She shared tips for parents and for working with children, and spoke of the importance of motivating children. LDAPR leaflets and the Community Impact Report for 2018-2019 were circulated and Maria Reolin noted that more information is available on the LDAPR website.

SE-31, moved by Barb Cyr, that the Special Presentation re Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region (LDAPR), be received.

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10. Solutions for Learning Conference: Enhancing Minds

Superintendent Moynihan stated that the Solutions for Learning Conference: Enhancing Minds, on March 11, 2020, is organized by Learning Disabilities Association of Halton-Hamilton.

SE-32, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the report re Solutions for Learning Conference: Enhancing Minds, be received.

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11. Ministry News Release: Applications Open for the Minister’s Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE)

Superintendent Moynihan noted that the deadline for MACSE applications is March 6, 2020.

SE-33, moved by Wes McDonald, that the report re Ministry News Release: Applications Open for the Minister’s Advisory Council on Special Education, be received.

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12. Letter from Kelsie Vink, Manager Services and Supports, Kerry’s Place Autism Services re Recent Changes to Funded Consultation Services

SE-34, moved by Nancy Leaton, that the Letter from Kelsie Vink, Manager Services and Supports, Kerry’s Place Autism Services re Recent Changes to Funded Consultation Services, be received.

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13. Question Period

There were no questions.

14. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

15. Adjournment

SE-35, moved by Mary Wright, that the meeting adjourn (21:25 hours).

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RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, held February 18, 2020, there were no recommendations to the Board.

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

1. Reports / Information Received

The Committee received the following reports/information: Special Education Classes to Support Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder; Superintendent's Report (oral); Student Independence Form; Consultation re Revision of Special Education Support Services (SESS) Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Operating Procedure SESS 3; Special Presentation - Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario; Solutions for Learning Conference: Enhancing Minds; Ministry News Release: Applications Open for the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education; Letter from Kelsie Vink, Manager Services and Supports; Kerry's Place Autism Services re Recent Changes to Funded Consultation Services.

Prepared by:

Lorelei Fernandes
Board Reporter

Submitted by:

Shawn Moynihan
Superintendent of Special Education Support Services
