

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Peel District School Board, held electronically under Regulation 463/97 of the Education Act, as amended, coordinated from the Brampton Room, the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street, Mississauga, Ontario on April 21, 2020 at 19:00 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
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
Sinthusha Panchalingam, Canadian Mental Health Association
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter
Fauzia Reza, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Mary Wright, Down Syndrome Association of Peel

Also present:

Stan Cameron, Trustee

Administration:

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

Marina Amin, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

SE-36, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the agenda be approved.

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2. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.

3. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, February 18, 2020

As requested, the minutes will be revised to reflect the correct spelling of a member's name.

SE-37, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting held February 18, 2020, as amended, be approved.

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

4. Notices of Motion and Petitions

There were no notices of motion or petitions.

5. Special Education Classes to Support Students with Behavioural Challenges

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Shawn Moynihan, invited Michelle Anderson, Coordinating Principal of Social Emotional Learning, and Amelia Hsu, Acting Behaviour Coordinator, to report on the supports provided to students with behavioural challenges. Using a slide presentation, Amelia Hsu outlined the behaviour characteristics of this exceptionality, and she highlighted that data in the Poverty Report shows a correlation between income and being identified with a Behaviour Exceptionality. Michelle Anderson reviewed the graph depicting a decline in number of students with a Behaviour Exceptionality over a 10-year period, and she clarified that decreasing numbers do not mean fewer students in need, as Behaviour Services support students who do not have a Behaviour Exceptionality but require support for social-emotional and behaviour needs. Students with a Behaviour Exceptionality are referred to the Intensive Support Team for service. Amelia Hsu described the identification process at the elementary level and the in-school supports provided to students. She explained that children in an Intensive Support Class have a higher level of need, where focus is on stabilization of mental health and social-emotional learning. Program locations with respect to Interval and Intensive Support classes in the North and South were reviewed. Michelle Anderson outlined the process of identification and flow of support to students at the secondary level. She spoke about the various learning strategies offered at the home secondary school and the annual review process. She described the various in-school supports available to secondary students, including: access to guidance counselors; school behaviour teaching assistants; special education resource officer, etc.

The administration responded to questions of clarification including that: psychoeducational assessments are completed before moving forward to an IPRC; psychoeducational assessments could indicate the existence of another exceptionality; students can move to intensive level support classes in the middle of a program when the data shows that the move will benefit the student.

5. Special Education Classes to Support Students with Behavioural Challenges
(Continued)

SE-38, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the report re Special Education Classes to Support Students with Behavioural Challenges, be received.

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6. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Moynihan stated that the report will focus on three aspects, namely, support to students and families during this period of virtual learning, connecting the work of the Special Education department to the Ministry Directives, and consulting with SEAC regarding budget items.

Superintendent Moynihan reported on the Peel DSB's Learning and Support Plan – A Community of Care – developed in consultation with administrators, educators, union and federation partners. He invited members to review the plan posted on the Board's website, which outlines the resources available to teachers, and students as they participate in distance learning. Shawn Moynihan commended the team for their efforts in developing special education supports and resources, noting that updates continue to be added to the site. He reported on the needs' assessment conducted by staff to provide additional technology, resources and supports, as well as videoconferencing options to enable Special Education staff connect with students and families, and to provide continued staff training and learning in a virtual environment. Superintendent Moynihan spoke of the distribution of Special Equipment Amount (SEA) technology to homes with the help of STOPR, and plans to provide SEA Sensory and Mobility equipment. He stated that In School Review Committees and case conferences will begin this week, and Identification, Placement, and Review Committees will resume in May 2020, so as to ensure a positive transition for students into the next school year. Director of Education, Peter Joshua, expressed appreciation for the work of staff in developing resources, and for the quick delivery of equipment to families. Following a members' comment, he acknowledged need to capitalize on new strategies and learning approaches that can be used in classroom settings as well. He expressed awareness for the challenges and uniqueness of individual student learning, especially during these circumstances, and advised that educators are doing their best to support students. Assessments will focus on work completed up until March 13, 2020. Trustees speaking commended staff for their hard work, and highlighted the Resolution passed at the Regular Meeting of the Board on April 15, 2020, regarding appreciation for the work of staff in developing resources to support virtual learning. Chair Foster thanked Director Joshua for the provision of laptops to students in need. Superintendent Moynihan indicated that he will be following up individually with members for their feedback on the experience of virtual learning in their communities.

(continued overleaf)

6. Superintendent's Report (Continued)

In response to the Ministry Directives relating to Special Education, Superintendent Moynihan spoke of plans that involve the use of disaggregated data to support appropriate guidance, and he referred to the report presented at the SEAC Meeting on December 17, 2019, regarding the use of student census data to identify which groups are underrepresented. Director Joshua confirmed the Board's commitment to the Ministry Directives and timelines. He stated that a key component of the plan and Ministry Directives includes community involvement in steps the Board will take in the future, while the current situation with COVID-19 restricts doing business normally. He advised that the Research and Accountability team is finalizing elementary and secondary census data, and a comprehensive report will soon be available.

In regard to consultation with SEAC on the Board's budget, Superintendent Moynihan indicated that he will email members the business cases reflective of priorities established by SEAC for students with special needs, which can be discussed at the next Committee meeting. This will include a full-time position to support students with a Gifted Exceptionality. A member suggested considering how other programs in the Board are marketed, and how children are streamed into locally developed programs.

SE-39, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the Superintendent's Report (oral), be received.

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7. Recommendations and Considerations from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Superintendent Moynihan stated that the above-noted report is a combination of information and perspectives received from SEAC members regarding placement assessment criteria and procedures, parent brochures, and information videos. Expressing appreciation for the many suggestions offered by members, Kelly Kawabe, Principal of Terry Fox Public School, acknowledged their value in contributing to the development of a parent brochure that will provide clarity and understanding of the various types of programs available to students with special needs, and the IPRC process. She indicated that insight offered with respect to the invitation letter, and assessment criteria and procedure has been noted, and included in the IPRC Operating Procedure – SESS 3.

SE-40, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the Recommendations and Considerations from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), be received.

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

Using a slide presentation, Kelly Kawabe reviewed the revised Operating Procedure for Identification, Placement and Review, noting its alignment with the practice of using a lens of inclusion throughout the document. She highlighted that the first placement for a student is always to be considered at the home school. Outlining the process and underlying principles followed while revising the operating procedure, Kelly Kawabe reviewed the definition and purpose of an IPRC, the types of IPRCs and process, elementary placement options and procedures. A member spoke of parent concerns for gifted children to be in a contained class, and the imbalance in number of contained classes between schools in the North and South. Superintendent Moynihan advised that the disproportionality of contained classes is being reviewed, and as the next round of IPRCs are completed, the department will have a more accurate number on gifted students for the next school year. He acknowledged that appropriate placement is a priority, and reported that 68% of the additional budget for 2018-2019 has been allocated to the assessment and identification of gifted students. Responding to a query regarding the integrity of the IPRC process, Superintendent Moynihan advised the member of the existing appeal process available to parents. He spoke of additional training provided to IPRC Chairs and best practices shared. He noted that a virtual meeting with all IPRC Chairs has been scheduled this Thursday in preparation for restarting the IPRC process, and ensuring consistency of practice. Another member expressed concerns about parent unawareness of the difference between the two IPRCs, namely In-School IPRC and Regional IPRC. Superintendent Moynihan advised that the process is being aligned to Ministry expectation and other school boards' practices. He indicated that this would also be an opportunity for staff to make parents aware of the option to approach the school principal. Superintendent Moynihan offered to discuss this particular concern with the member so as to ensure that the most appropriate placement is provided.

SE-41, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the report re Revision of Special Education Support Services (SESS) Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Operating Procedure (OP) SESS 3, be received.

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9. Accessibility Plan Status Report - 2019

With a slide presentation, Meghan Echlin, Special Program and Special Needs Coordinating Principal reviewed process to support students and school accessibility in Peel. She advised that, as accessibility requests are received throughout the year, there is ongoing need to revise and prioritize them. Priorities are vetted through the Controller of Facilities and Environmental Services, and the Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, prior to seeking final approval by Director's office. She reported on collaboration with the Project Coordination Manager, David Dadd, who reviews and provides site information to her. Meghan Echlin described the various requests received including curb cuts, ramps, automatic door openers, Braille signage, stage lifts, barrier free work stations, and Alternative Learning Environment rooms. She reviewed project plans for 2020-2021 at schools across the Board, and highlighted that some student specific projects are moved as the student changes schools.

9. Accessibility Plan Status Report – 2019 (Continued)

Members speaking expressed appreciation for the information provided, and the ongoing prioritization of requests to stay within budget, notwithstanding the significant costs involved to install certain pieces of equipment. In regard to a member's request for details on project status in line with AODA requirements, Superintendent Moynihan will email the document to SEAC members.

SE-42, moved by Sue Lawton, that the report re Accessibility Plan Status Report - 2019, be received.

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10. Communications

SE-43, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the following communications, be received.

1. Letter from A. Omstead, Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), Greater Essex County District School Board to Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce.
2. Letter from K. Allen, Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board to Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce.

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11. Question Period

Carol Ogilvie asked about the motion and activity log, and whether it would be included in the agenda for the next meeting. Superintendent Moynihan responded in the affirmative.

Carol Ogilvie queried whether there would be another Accessibility Group meeting scheduled. Superintendent Moynihan will follow up with the Superintendent of Human Resources Support Services regarding scheduling the meeting in a virtual format.

Carol Ogilvie expressed appreciation for all the work done to engage students in online learning. She asked about monitoring progress, and whether there will be avenues for feedback from students and parents. Superintendent Moynihan noted that levels of participation are being reviewed, and ways to address non-participation. Director Joshua advised that direct contact between educators and students will be a key metric, but it is too early to determine, as the Board is trying to ensure everyone has access to learning material and teachers are connecting to students.

Shelley Foster asked about ability to ensure that all teachers are reaching out to students, and whether that information is provided to parents. Superintendent Moynihan indicated that principals have the ability to enter an educator's class virtually, as they would do under normal circumstances to make decisions around monitoring. Director Joshua advised that parents can contact schools with their concerns, as principals are monitoring all calls made to their schools. Superintendents of education are also available.

11. Question Period (Continued)

Jennifer Knight asked about metrics for tracking the percentage of students reaching out for supports, and action taken. Superintendent Moynihan indicated that monitoring will be at the school level, and aggregated data can be maintained at the superintendent office level. Director Joshua outlined efforts to navigate resources and equipment to schools. He stated that principals have been asked to support and monitor learning, but have not been able to aggregate data. He noted that this matter will be followed up with the Research and Accountability team.

Jennifer Knight asked for details on the distribution of equipment. Superintendent Moynihan confirmed the availability of data regarding the distribution of Special Equipment Amount Technology and Equipment. Director Joshua advised that data is available on the distribution of devices and can be provided. He noted that distribution of technology which began in elementary schools will be completed to secondary schools next week.

12. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

13. Adjournment

SE-44, moved by Jennifer Knight, that the meeting adjourn (21:00 hours).