

PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Peel District School Board, coordinated from the Brampton Room, the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre, 5650 Hurontario Street, Mississauga, Ontario on May 19, 2020 at 19:00 hours. The meeting was held electronically under Regulation 463/97 of the Education Act, as amended.

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
Fauzia Reza, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Mary Wright, Down Syndrome Association of Peel

Absent:

Sinthusha Panchalingam, Canadian Mental Health Association
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter

Also present:

Brad MacDonald, Chair, Peel DSB
Anju Mistry, Down Syndrome Association of Peel (Alternate)

Administration:

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

Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

SE-45, moved by Carol Oitment, 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, April 21, 2020

SE-46, moved by Sue Lawton, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting held April 21, 2020, be approved.

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4. Notices of Motion and Petitions

There were no notices of motion or petitions.

5. Integrated Services

Bob Cambria, Coordinator of Integrated Services, Special Education Support Services, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to speak about his position, which is the result of identifying the need to develop a more comprehensive way to address the multiple needs of some of the most at-risk students and their families. The Coordinator of Integrated Services position provides an opportunity for a unique collaboration of community partners and the Peel DSB, and Bob Cambria noted that he represents the Board on such committees as the Children's Review Committee and Community Case conferences.

Regarding the Children's Review Committee, Bob Cambria reported on its mandate to review situations of children and youth up to 18 years of age, and their families, whose needs are urgent, complex, extraordinary and atypical, and cannot be met with the existing services of agencies. He indicated that he is a member of the Peel Adult Services Solutions Committee which reviews transitions for youth from 18 to 21 years of age leaving the Board, and Peel Coordinated Services Planning Committee, led by Erinoaks, which looks at efficiencies in service coordination.

Describing the Integrated Home Instruction team, Bob Cambria explained its mandate to provide services to at-risk and marginalized students across the Board. These students are marginalized for a variety of reasons, including parental consent, transition from group homes, etc., and need support to transition back to the school system. Bob Cambria listed members of the team and provided brief background information on their experience in the field. He reported that the team supports 26 secondary students and 20 elementary students.

SE-47, moved by Carol Oitment, that the report re Integrated Services, be received.

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6. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Shawn Moynihan, thanked local associations for their feedback regarding supports for students with special needs with respect to distance learning. He noted that, in summary, the experience with distance learning is highly individual and dependent on a number of factors, including technology at home, frequency of contact from the school to the learner, age and developmental level of the learner, and access to supports at home. He remarked that, as such, the experience of each family and each child is different. Positive feedback related to: distribution of technology; availability of web-based resources; deepening of Empowering Modern Learning; increased teacher proficiency with technology; better use of Assistive Technology; teachers and teaching assistants checking in and connecting with students; increased specific focus on Individual Education Plan goals and rich dialogue on how these are being met. With regard to challenges, Superintendent Moynihan highlighted lack of face-to-face contact, inconsistent level of contact and frequency, and technology at home. A member noted that she is not aware of communication being shared with regard to one-on-one mental health support by specialists, and that parents may not know that help is available in more serious cases of mental health. Superintendent Moynihan will follow up. In response to another question, he confirmed that medications and devices were sent home, and parents can contact their schools if these have not been returned.

Referring to documents that were emailed to members, Shawn Moynihan invited comments from members regarding the format of the Log of Action Items. It was suggested that completion date of items be noted, and closed items be taken off the log. Chair Foster requested members to review the log and email or telephone their suggestions to Superintendent Moynihan. Regarding the reports on Accessibility Rating of Schools as of December 2019, and the Annual Report to SEAC which provides a summary of accessibility improvements since 2018, he asked members for feedback and suggestions. Noting that the student census report will be taken to the Board next week, Shawn Moynihan advised that two reports will be brought to the June 2020 SEAC meeting. One report will outline the factors that affected the collection of data from students with special needs. In this connection, he spoke of undertaking a field test next year of an improved process which can then be fine-tuned ahead of the next census. The second report will be the student census data with an overview of special education student data. He stated that a report providing disaggregated data on the intersectionality between different programs and classes will be brought to the September 2020 SEAC meeting.

Superintendent Moynihan indicated that the June 2020 SEAC agenda will include a report on the Positive Intervention Behaviour Plan, and that he would like to undertake a focused discussion to obtain members' perspectives on an atypical school start-up in September 2020. He reported that he will email members the draft SEAC meeting schedule for the 2020-2021 school year and, when details are made available by the Ministry, he will provide members with information regarding summer programs,.

SE-48, moved by Jennifer Knight, that the Superintendent's Report, be received.

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7. Superintendent of Equity and Community Services Job Posting

Referring to the report and background information provided, Director of Education, Peter Joshua, stated that the job description is in compliance with Ministry directives, and that the position is similar to that of other school boards. He advised that the responsibility of the Superintendent of Equity and Community Services will include creating and supporting a robust Equity Office. Director Joshua explained that in viewing equity at all levels, the administration recognizes the need for an expert in special education in the Equity Office, who will be a connector in terms of implementing an interdisciplinary approach to support improvements for special needs students. The special education hire will report to the Superintendent of Equity and Community Services but will have dotted line reporting to the Special Education department so that equity work in special education is not done in isolation.

SE-49, moved by Sue Lawton, that the report re Superintendent of Equity and Community Services Job Posting, be received.

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8. Consultation on 2020-2021 Budget Development

Stating the legislative requirement for SEAC to have an opportunity to participate in the Board's budget development process, Shawn Moynihan noted the specific business cases that will be considered for the 2020-2021 budget included in the report. He confirmed that SEAC members may email him with their suggestions.

Superintendent Moynihan, Meghan Echlin, Coordinating Principal, Special Needs, and Katina Paleologos, Coordinating Principal, Autism Spectrum Disorder, then reviewed each of the business cases. These related to: one Special Education Resource teacher; one Occupational Therapist; two Autism Spectrum Disorder Itinerant teachers; one Secondary Special Education Resource teacher; four Board certified Behaviour Therapists; 25 Long Term Occasional teaching assistants. Members' questions of clarification were responded to, including: the Special Education Resource teacher (SERT) is a permanent full-time position; elementary SERTs can be called upon to provide higher level of support to single administration schools; number of students in the Autism Spectrum Disorder continues to trend upward; division of work of the Secondary Special Education Resource teacher between north and south Peel will be weighted towards student population. Trustee members of SEAC stated that they will do their best to advocate for special education children in considering the business cases during the budget development process.

SE-50, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the report re Consultation on 2020-2021 Budget Development, be received.

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9. Memorandum from Deputy Minister, Nancy Naylor, to Directors of Education re Continuity of Learning for Students with Special Education Needs and Mental Health Supports

Superintendent Moynihan noted that the Ministry memorandum outlines expectations with regard to specific areas to support students with special education needs. These include expectations regarding Identification, Placement and Review Committees (IPRCs), IEPs, Assistive Technology and other special education equipment, Specialized Health Support Services and Special Needs Programming, and Mental Health Supports. Shawn Moynihan reported that IPRCs and Annual Reviews began in May to be held in a virtual environment, and that the system will be updated this week regarding IEPs. For IEPs, two data sources will be considered: data collected before school boards moved to distance learning; data gathered during virtual learning. In response to Chair Foster's question about practices at other school boards, Superintendent Moynihan stated that he has been in contact with his peers in GTA school boards by email, and through video conference once a week. Director Joshua confirmed that the Council of Ontario Directors of Education had been meeting via teleconference once a week, and are now meeting twice a week. Discussions at these meetings include responding to requirements from the Ministry, and consistency of practice.

In response to a member's question, Superintendent Moynihan confirmed that the Ministry requirement of annual IPRCs is being met by the Board. With regard to the legislative requirement for school boards to conduct ten SEAC meetings per school year, he suggested that the focused discussion regarding an atypical school start-up in September 2020, be held in a separate meeting. Speaking to the option of two SEAC meetings in June or one each in June and July, the administration noted that it would be helpful to receive SEAC input earlier, in order to develop appropriate school start-up plans.

SE-51, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the report re Memorandum from Deputy Minister, Nancy Naylor, to Directors of Education re Continuity of Learning for Students with Special Education Needs and Mental Health Supports, be received.

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**10. Letter from Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, to Parents /
Memorandum from Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, and Deputy Minister, Nancy Naylor, to Chairs of District School Boards/Directors of Education re Extension of School Closures to May 31, 2020 /
Memorandum from Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, and Deputy Minister, Nancy Naylor, to Chairs of District School Boards/Directors of Education re Guidance for Continuity of Learning/Progress Updates**

Superintendent Moynihan explained that the communications from the Ministry of Education highlights Ministry expectations regarding number of hours' instruction per week, closure of schools until May 31, 2020, and guidance regarding continuous learning and synchronous learning. Replying to a member's question of clarification, Shawn Moynihan noted that Superintendent of Curriculum and Instructional Support Services, Adrian Graham, provided direction to principals as to what synchronous learning will look like, taking into account the needs of families.

(Continued overleaf)

**10. Letter from Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, to Parents /
Memorandum from Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, and Deputy Minister,
Nancy Naylor, to Chairs of District School Boards/Directors of Education re Extension
of School Closures to May 31, 2020 /
Memorandum from Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, and Deputy Minister,
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for Continuity of Learning/Progress Updates (Continued)**

Director Joshua explained that synchronous learning does not imply only video conferencing, but may be in other forms, and is expected to occur at least once a week. Taking into consideration household needs and circumstances of students, and equity of access, synchronous learning includes making connections with students as well as facilitating connections between students. Supports are being provided for educators to make sure that these connections occur regularly for students. In response to a question, Shawn Moynihan reported that a protocol was developed with assistance from the Social Work Department to help teachers and students facing challenges, and ensure all students are being supported. He stated that he will follow up with Jim Van Buskirk, Chief Social Worker, and provide updated information. Reporting on feedback received, he advised that learners are engaged with technology, but there appear to be some difficulties regarding consistency. With respect to video conferencing, he remarked that teacher capacity has been growing exponentially. A member stated that her child is very happy with the online learning, and she asked whether distance learning can be maintained during the summer, especially for students with special needs. Reporting that the teacher has called every week and asked about progress, the member expressed appreciation and thanks to staff for their efforts.

SE-52, moved by Mary Wright, that the following items, be received:

1. Letter from Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, to Parents
2. Memorandum from Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, and Deputy Minister, Nancy Naylor, to Chairs of District School Boards/Directors of Education re Extension of School Closures to May 31, 2020
3. Memorandum from Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, and Deputy Minister, Nancy Naylor, to Chairs of District School Boards/Directors of Education re Guidance for Continuity of Learning/Progress Updates

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11. Letter from Leo de Jourdan, Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee, Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic DSB to Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce / Letter from Stephanie Lee, Chair, and Katie Ansley, Vice-Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee, Avon-Maitland DSB to Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce

SE-53, moved by Ann Smith, that the following items, be received:

1. Letter from Leo de Jourdan, Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee, Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic DSB to Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce
2. Letter from Stephanie Lee, Chair, and Katie Ansley, Vice-Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee, Avon-Maitland DSB to Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce

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12. Question Period

Ann Smith referred to a discussion about the draft IPRC operating procedure that was shared at a previous meeting, where it was stated that parents would be asked to leave the room when the decision is made by the IPRC. Barbara Cyr confirmed that this is also stated in the draft operating procedure. Ann Smith noted that this is in contravention of legislation which calls for parents to be part of the decision. Superintendent Moynihan confirmed that parents' participation is encouraged, and that language in contravention of regulation will be amended in the operating procedure.

Barbara Cyr noted that the Board sends out communications on specific issues to parents, but some members who do not have children in the system do not receive these reports. She requested that SEAC members be included in the distribution list as people in the community contact SEAC members on some issues. Shawn Moynihan confirmed that he will follow up to include SEAC members.

Chair Shelley Foster noted that the agenda includes the section, Public Question Period, and she asked about accommodating members of the public in these virtual meetings. Katina Paleologos explained that there is a process to receive questions from the public by email, which she is monitoring.

13. Public Question Period

Carla Shelton asked whether SEAC is considering commissioning an independent review of special education programs at the Peel DSB, which includes: advantages and disadvantages of integrating special education students into regular classrooms; advantages and disadvantages of having contained classes spread out among a large number of secondary schools; the fact that the special education AQ does not sufficiently prepare teachers who work with special education students; the lack of formal mentorship in this niche area; instances of injuries to staff from students who display aggressive behaviour; recommendations of teachers and teaching assistants who have been working with special education students. Shawn Moynihan responded.

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13. Public Question Period (Continued)

There was discussion regarding responses to questions from the public being included in the agenda. Superintendent Moynihan stated that responses can be provided to the member of the public in a timely manner, and included in the agenda for the following month's SEAC meeting as part of his report to SEAC. In response to a member's question, it was noted that a motion approved by the Board will be required to effect a change in practice regarding minutes.

14. Adjournment

SE-54, moved by Ann Smith, that the meeting adjourn (20:55 hours).