

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, April 16, 2013 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada, Chair
Stan Cameron, Trustee, Vice-Chair
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario Peel Chapter
Sandy Milakovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living

Absent: (apologies received marked *)

Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children
Meredith Johnson, Trustee
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for Blind and Visually Impaired Children
Brad McDonald, Trustee
Lorraine Yuill, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region*

Also present:

Marg Fishbein, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel
Sue Lawton, Trustee
Marilyn Matis, Association for Bright Children (Alternate)
Linda Standish, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel

Administration:

Louise Sirisko, Superintendent, Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)
Hazel Mason, Superintendent of Education
Patricia Rossall, Superintendent of Education, Alternative Programs

Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

SE-35, moved by Carol Oitment, that the agenda, be approved.

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2. Special Presentation re My Blueprint

Superintendent of Education, Alternative Programs, Patricia Rossall, introduced Adrian Graham, Student Success Learning to 18 Leader, who has been working on the implementation of My Blueprint, and Hilary Giles, Resource Teacher, who is coordinating the initiative among staff and teachers.

Hilary Giles provided a demonstration of Peel's My Blueprint website with respect to setting up a Peel My Blueprint account, and she reviewed the Dashboard, which contains information on the user's IPP (Individual Pathways Plan) tracker, goal setting, experience and resume. She indicated that students can link their account to that of their teacher, guidance counselor, as well as parent or guardian, and that My Blueprint is compatible with assistive technologies, such as Premier, Kurzweil, etc. Details regarding the high school planner and personal profile were provided, and Hilary Giles explained that the post-secondary planner allows students to review all options for pathways and programs. These are described in detail with regard to the minimum average required, non-academic requirements, etc.

Hilary Giles confirmed that the information for colleges and universities, and workplace opportunities is updated annually. Responses to further questions of clarification included: information on My Blueprint was shared with parents at the Parent Literacy Conference; online and telephone support available to assist parents in accessing the site; staff are working on an interface with SIS to allow students to access voluntary activities; students can track their volunteer hours; definitions and suggestions to help students with goal setting. Adrian Graham clarified that the site is now live, and a communication has been developed for each school to use My Blueprint, beginning in September 2013. He advised that the Ministry has recommended that students use My Blueprint at least twice a year.

SE-36, moved by Carol Oitment, that the presentation re My Blueprint, be received.

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3. Special Presentation re iPad Project

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Louise Sirisko, recalled the special presentation by Jane Lek, Principal of Arnott Charlton Public School, regarding the iPad project at the February 19, 2013 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting. Superintendent Sirisko indicated that Principal Lek will provide further information on how the iPad project impacts student achievement and supports student learning.

Principal Jane Lek reported that the iPad initiative involves four schools and supports students in contained classrooms. She introduced Simone Gravesande, Principal of Kingswood Drive Public School, Leah Romaniello, Special Education Resource Teacher - Behaviour, Bob Gardner, Resource Teacher – Instructional Technology, Rajneet Singh, Special Education Teacher (IGLD), and Adrian Furniss and Lesley Belanger, Teachers at Arnott Charlton Public School.

3. Special Presentation re iPad Project (Continued)

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Principal Lek indicated that the presentation will highlight the experience of schools in using iPads, student learning and achievement, and next steps. The goals of the initiative is to improve strategies with the appropriate use of iPad apps, and create a link with collaborative inquiry. The presenters took turns in reviewing the PowerPoint slides. The importance of understanding who the students in the project are, was noted. A majority of the students present high behaviour challenges due to mental health, environmental or other issues, which may often coexist with learning issues and disabilities. Using the iPad for learning has led to an increase in student engagement and stabilized behaviour. The technological integration has been differentiated by school, based on the greatest area of need (GAN), with a balanced approach grounded on pedagogy. Highlights of the experiences at H.F. Loughlin Public School, Kingswood Drive Public School, Darcel Avenue Senior Public School and Arnott Charlton Public School included: code of conduct for students using iPads; preparing students for the procedures and routines that needed to be in place when the iPads arrived in the classroom; helping students to express feelings of empathy and sympathy; students became more confident when using iPads and showed pride in their work; students had the opportunity to practise their French communication skills; increased opportunities for self-reflection. Video clips of students working with iPads were shown.

It was noted that outcomes of the iPad project are positive, and students grow significantly, with increasing engagement. Students who earlier had difficulty completing academic tasks became eager to achieve, with increased academic focus and decreasing behavioural issues. Other outcomes included: differentiated instruction; increased ability to follow routines and expectations; feasibility of one on one instruction; digital citizenship; positive interaction with principal and vice-principal; social justice; renewed excitement about teaching and learning; self-directed professional development. Principal Lek indicated that the next steps are to increase the challenge to students with higher level of academics, and continue with collaborative inquiry to drive student assessment and instruction. She noted that the iPad can provide evidence for anecdotal observations at the ISRC, and she suggested that more quantitative data can be gathered on student achievement. Next steps were highlighted, including: teaching digital citizenship before students use the iPad as a learning tool; involve more contained classes; Year 1 participants to take a leadership role to guide and support other contained class teachers and build capacity; provide professional development and technology support to co-learn and co-plan. In response to members' questions, it was clarified that the iPads are used for one or two lessons a day, and the learning is balanced with other resources.

SE-37, moved by Ann Smith, that the special presentation re iPad Project, be received.

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4. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

5. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, March 19, 2013

SE-38, moved by Carol Oitment, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, held March 19, 2013, be approved.

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6. Safe and Caring Schools

Superintendent Sirisko stated that the focus this month and the next will be on the work done with high needs students, and the legislation, Board policies and operating procedures that need to be considered when dealing with students with high special needs will be highlighted.

Therese Fitzpatrick, Special Education Coordinator, referred to Bill 13 – Accepting Schools Act, and briefly reviewed sections of Policy #48, Safe Schools. She advised that Bill 13 requires that school boards develop policies for bullying prevention and intervention. She stated that bullying can be because of several characteristics, including disability, and she indicated that Board staff are also working on cyber bullying prevention.

Therese Fitzpatrick noted that implementing bullying prevention and intervention practices is also a part of the Board’s School Success Plan. Superintendent Sirisko recalled that a SEAC member had asked about the use of Ministry funds for bullying, and she reported that staff are using a multipronged approach by providing students with resources and curriculum as well as information on whom to contact when there is bullying.

SE-39, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the report re Safe and Caring Schools, be received.

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7. Intensive Support in Peel - Update

Marie Fawcett-Carter, Behaviour Coordinator, recalled the report on Intensive Support for Peel Students that was presented at the January 2013 Committee meeting. Providing background information, she indicated that the Behaviour Review resulted in the revision of the behaviour support model, and also provided an opportunity to realize financial efficiencies. Marie Fawcett-Carter advised that the Intensive Support (IS) model will address the needs of students with persistent and escalating behaviour / mental health challenges. She noted that the IS model supports students by providing intensive support for a time limited period. The IS team will work with school staff to build capacity around understanding behavioural and mental health challenges, problem solve to address the challenges, and support academic program planning to promote student success.

Marie Fawcett-Carter reported that a steering committee was set up to consider the information that will guide the model. She brought to members’ attention documents regarding: Supporting the student with behaviour and mental health needs; ISRC Checklist; IS Model for Elementary; IS Model for Secondary.

7. Intensive Support in Peel – Update (Continued)

The four phases of the model were outlined. Under Phase 1, the teacher observes the student for behaviour difficulties, leading to Phase 2, when PSSP staff are made aware of the student profile through collaboration and consultation. Continued support and maintenance is provided under Phase 3, and the school team and the Intensive Support Planning Committee consider next steps for the student in Phase 4. Marie Fawcett-Carter indicated that there are seven IS teams, with five teams at the elementary level and two for secondary students. Details regarding the responsibilities of staff connected with the IS team were provided.

SE-40, moved by Carol Oitment, that the update report re Intensive Support in Peel, be received.

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8. De-escalation and Personal Safety

Gillian Kajganich, Special Education Coordinator, reported that the Board offers training on personal safety and de-escalation techniques, but some of the training is basic and may not meet all the needs. She reviewed the information on De-escalation and Personal Safety Training included in the above-noted report, and stated that the training is based on that provided by the Crisis Prevention Institute of Milwaukee. There are four basic principles: care, welfare, safety, security. Gillian Kajganich highlighted Operating Procedure #17, Procedures with Dealing with Students Exhibiting High Risk Behavioural Difficulties, and Bill 157, Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act. Currently, approximately 1,830 teaching assistants, and 700 teaching staff and administrators have taken the training. Special Education Coordinator, Bob Cambria, reported that the training has been offered for almost 20 years, and has been modified for different audiences. In addition to the training for verbal escalation continuum, training is also modified for non-verbal students. In reply to a question, it was clarified that training is provided on professional learning days and is offered to new hires immediately. A member suggested that the training also be offered to parents.

SE-41, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the report re De-escalation and Personal Safety, be received.

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9. Professional Learning on May 13, 2013

A schedule for the professional learning day on May 13, 2013 was displayed. Superintendent Sirisko noted that the Board's professional learning activities are always student-centred and support student needs. She indicated that a committee will be struck to review Operating Procedure #17, Procedures for Dealing with Students Exhibiting High Risk Behavioural Difficulties, to make sure it is current. It was noted that the De-escalation and Personal Safety training will be offered on this professional learning day.

9. Professional Learning, May 13, 2013 (Continued)

SE-42, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the oral report re Professional Learning on May 13, 2013, be received.

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10. Communications

SE-43, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the following communications, be received:

1. Letter to Ministers Liz Sandals and Ted McMeekin from SEAC Chair, Durham Catholic DSB re Developmental Services of Ontario (DSO) Agency Funding
2. Letters to Ministers Liz Sandals and Ted McMeekin from Peel DSB Chair of the Board and SEAC Chair, re Transition from School to Adult Services for Students with Developmental Disabilities
3. Annual School Psychology Conference on Thursday, May 2, 2013 re Youth Suicidal Behaviour and the Schools

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Superintendent Louise Sirisko drew members' attention to the Annual School Psychology Conference being held on Thursday, May 2, 2013 on the subject of Youth Suicidal Behaviour and the Schools. She invited SEAC members to the Conference, requesting those interested in attending to email her or Vera Colaco for tickets.

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SE-43

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11. Question Period

Barbara Cyr inquired whether some time can be assigned to consultation or discussion on principal / vice-principal criteria, with specific reference to special education qualification.

Carol Ogilvie reported that, last year, it was announced that the Learning Disabilities Association of Mississauga and the Learning Disabilities Association of North Peel were in the processing of merging into one organization, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region (LDAPR). She noted that there is also the prospect of expanding programs and including Caledon in the Association. She stated that she will be the alternate member and Lorraine Yuill will be the LDAPR representative on SEAC. Carol Ogilvie stated that she has circulated two flyers from LDAPR, on "A Night of Comedy" and "LDAPR's Got Talent".

Ann Smith asked about the Special Education Plan. Superintendent Sirisko advised that the OnSIS report is ready. The Special Education Plan will be drafted in May, and finalized in June for the budget. She confirmed that the Grants for Student Needs has been announced.

12. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

13. Adjournment

SE-44, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the meeting adjourn (21:05 hours).

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