

December 18, 2012
Special Education Advisory Committee:ma

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, December 18, 2012 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada
Stan Cameron, Trustee
Lynne Cramer, Community Living Mississauga
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children
Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children
Meredith Johnson, Trustee
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Brad MacDonald, Trustee,
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for Blind and Visually Impaired Children
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of North Peel
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Lorraine Yuill, Learning Disabilities Association of Mississauga

Absent: (apologies received)

Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario Peel Chapter
Sandy Milakovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch

Also present:

Marg Fishbein, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel
Marilyn Matis, Association for Bright Children (Alternate)
Janet McDougald, Trustee
Mary Anne McDowell, PSSP
Linda Standish, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel
Jeff White, Trustee

Administration:

Louise Sirisko, Superintendent, Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)
Christine Beal, Controller, Finance Support Services
Scott Moreash, Coordinating Superintendent

Marina Amin, Board Reporter

1. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Louise Sirisko, assumed the Chair, and called the meeting to order. She called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee.

Ann Smith nominated Barbara Byers.

There were no further nominations. After observing the standard one minute silence, Barbara Byers was acclaimed Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee for 2012 - 2013.

Assuming the Chair, Barbara Byers called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee.

Brad MacDonald nominated Stan Cameron

There were no further nominations. After observing the standard one minute silence, Stan Cameron was declared Vice-Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee for 2012 - 2013.

2. Approval of Agenda

SE-01, moved by Lynne Cramer, that the agenda be approved.

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3. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

4. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, November 20, 2012

With regard to Item 5, Written Question, Lorraine Yuill requested that the sentence, "that classes for Grade 9 English college preparation course have been cancelled at Lorne Park Secondary School" be amended to, "that classes for Grade 11 English college preparation course have been cancelled at Lorne Park Secondary School."

SE-02, moved by Carol Oitment, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of November 20, 2012, as amended, be approved.

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5. **Written Questions**

Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, delivered the following written question:

“How is the strike and work to rule action affecting In School Enhanced Learning Program professional development.”

In response, Superintendent Sirisko indicated that as per the sanctions provided by the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, all professional development has been suspended at this time. However, teachers are still able to access the resources posted on the Board’s website.

Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of North Peel, delivered the following written question:

“Has there been any program modification planning with respect to if the strike continues, and how it affects students going into Grade 9 transitions.”

Superintendent Sirisko responded that the Operations Committee meets frequently to work through issues that arise, and she noted that the school community is apprised in a timely manner about the impact on students and staff. Louise Sirisko added that there will be further discussion at SEAC following implementation of the law after December 31, 2012.

6. **Teaching Assistant Allocation Module**

Superintendent Sirisko spoke about the development of an online module to handle the allocation of teaching assistants, and manage the movement between schools of special needs students along with their specialized supports and personal care requirements in a timely manner. She noted that school itinerant staff will be requested to identify, and record online, the requirements of special education students, including personal care, so that when a student transfers to a new location, the relevant data can easily be transmitted to the new location. Louise Sirisko indicated that the online version of the module is ready to launch and will be fully operational by January 2013. SEAC members will be able to view a simulation of the module at a future meeting.

SE-03, moved by Lorraine Yuill, that the oral report re Teaching Assistant Allocation Module, be received.

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7. Budget Considerations for 2012 - 2013

Each year the budget considerations are brought to the Special Education Advisory Committee in May. This year, however, Superintendent Sirisko highlighted the importance of discussing the budget constraints faced by the Board, and boards across the Province, earlier in the year, to obtain feedback from SEAC members on their priority areas of focus. She invited Christine Beal, Controller of Finance Support Services, to provide an overview of the budget considerations for the 2012 – 2013 school year.

Controller Beal, provided details of the impact in Peel as a result of the Drummond Report recommendations, Bill 115, and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA), some of which included reductions in: benefits benchmark funding; school operations grant; Board administration and computer and textbook grants. She indicated that while modest increases in grants for commodity prices, inflation increases, and electricity costs, were provided, school boards were directed by the government not to budget for salary increases or increments across the grids. Christine Beal provided details of steps taken to develop a balanced budget in Peel, including some reduction in: resource coordinator positions; school office secretarial positions, discretionary budgets across all departments. She provided a detailed report of the additional cost of \$7 million to the Board as a result of Bill 115, which will not be funded by the Ministry. This has resulted in a deficit, and the revised estimates for 2012 - 2013 have been filed with the Ministry. She noted that the revised estimates show that the special education envelope is overspent by approximately \$ 14 million. Christine Beal advised that a Budget Development Committee has been set up to explore avenues for efficiencies.

Superintendent Sirisko thanked Christine Beal for her detailed presentation of the budget considerations. She noted that the Special Education department would appreciate input from SEAC members about the areas of service provided by Peel that they consider to be fundamental and important to special education.

Therese Fitzpatrick, Coordinating Principal, added that, in light of the budget considerations, the Special Education department has been working on developing ways and means to continue to deliver quality supports and services. She reviewed the information package circulated earlier, including: the Special Educational organizational chart comprising of itinerant staff and behaviour teaching assistants; complement of teaching assistants in the system and programs they are assigned to; copy of the recommendations for the mobile behaviour support program - by exceptionality, which tracks the number of students in each of those exceptionalities over a five-year period. Therese Fitzpatrick asked SEAC members to review the information and to make recommendations about supports and services of value, or any areas that need to be re-evaluated for efficiencies, where supports and services are to be maintained. She also requested members to share other ideas and suggestions for efficiencies that may not be represented in the package. Members broke into groups to discuss the information and provide ideas and suggestions.

A member expressed positive comments about the Peel District School Board's ability to provide services for all exceptionalities across the Board, and to use funds in a fiscally responsible manner.

7. Budget Considerations for 2012 – 2013 (Continued)

Board Chair McDougald commented on Peel being the lowest funded Board for Special Education in Ontario and noted the use of old student data for funding. She indicated that while there is a need to look for and create efficiencies within the system, the Board needs to highlight the fact that this is not an expenditure problem but an issue of unfair funding. Superintendent Sirisko stated that 90% of funding for special needs students comes from the Per Pupil Amount, for which Peel is the lowest funded, and 10% from the High Needs Amount.

SE-04, moved by Lynne Cramer, that the oral report re Budget Considerations for 2012 - 2013, be received.

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8. Support Student Transitions in Peel: Gillian Chassels re“Can Do Candles and Crafts”

Gillian Chassels, an independent entrepreneur, and former Peel student, provided an overview of Can Do Candles and Crafts, an experiential learning opportunity for students with special needs. She outlined the key messages of the program that: it can be started with an initial investment for materials; benefits include student engagement and valuable employment skills training; the program has gained significant momentum and support is required to grow it further. Gillian Chassels highlighted the positive aspects of the program, indicating that Can Do Candles and Crafts inspires its students with the “Can Do” attitude and fosters an environment that recognizes special learning needs while preparing students for life outside the school environment. Describing the program, Gillian Chassels displayed video clips of students engaged in the candle making process. She also highlighted the multiple areas of business that students are exposed to in the program, including: marketing and graphic design, web design, inventory tracking, accounting, public relations. Gillian Chassels outlined the benefits of a Board partnership and spoke on some of the numerous avenues available to promote and sell candles and crafts.

Superintendent Sirisko thanked Gillian Chassel for her informative presentation, and indicated that staff will assess some Peel schools for introduction of this program.

SE-05, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the report re Support Student Transitions in Peel: Gillian Chassels re “Can Do Candles and Crafts”, be received.

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9. Vocational Programs

Superintendent Sirisko spoke about plans to commence a vocational program in Caledon at Humberview Secondary School. She advised that the recommendation will be brought to the Physical Planning and Building Committee, as well as a report will be brought to the Special Education Advisory Committee. Louise Sirisko noted that the proposal would allow students who chose not to attend the vocational program at Judith Nyman Secondary School due to the school's distant location, to now attend the vocational program at a school in Caledon.

SE-06, moved by Lynne Cramer, that the oral report re Vocational Programs, be received.

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10. Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA)

Superintendent Sirisko indicated that the Board Improvement Plan 2012 – 2013 for Student Achievement also includes targets for special education students. She noted, however, that with the current labour situation, implementation of key instruction and assessment practices will be challenging. The Board Improvement Plan will be brought back for further discussion at a future meeting.

SE-07, moved by Brad MacDonald, that the report re Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA), be received.

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11. Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List

Shelley Foster drew attention to the error in her email address. This will be corrected.

SE-08, moved by Carol Oitment, that the Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List, be received.

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12. Communications

SE-09, moved by Shelley Foster, that the following communications, be received:

1. Letter to Minister Laurel Broten from SEAC Chair, Renfrew County District School Board re Funding Model for Special Education
2. Letter re resignation from SEAC of Lynne Cramer, Community Living Mississauga
3. Letter to Lynne Cramer from Janet McDougald re resignation of Community Living Mississauga's representative to SEAC
4. Letter to Minister Laurel Broten from SEAC Chair, Upper Canada District School Board re Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder and Mandatory Special Education Preparatory Courses for Teachers

12. Communication (Continued)

- 5. Memorandum from Ministry of Education re Secondary School Completion in Four Years – Changes to Funding After 34 Credit Threshold
- 6. Memorandum from Barry Finlay, Ministry of Education re Supporting Students with Special Education Needs

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Referring to Lynne Cramer’s resignation from SEAC, Chair Byers, commented on her 20 years of active and committed service as a member of the Special Education Advisory Committee. She indicated that, as yet, Community Living, Mississauga, does not have a replacement representative. The Special Education Advisory Committee presented Lynne Cramer with a token of appreciation for her long commitment to special education, and on behalf of the Board, Trustee Brad MacDonald presented Lynne Cramer with a memento for her valued service.

Regarding Item 12.5, Secondary School Completion in Four Years – Changes to Funding After 34 Credit Threshold, Superintendent Sirisko, noted that students with an IEP are exempted from the 34 credit count.

With respect to Item 12.6 re Supporting Students with Special Education Needs, Louise Sirisko indicated that the Ministry will be providing some funding to school boards to support the development of IEPs, and that the funding will be based on average daily enrolment.

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SE-09 carried

13. Question Period

Ann Smith commented that she has enjoyed working with Lynne Cramer and invited her to continue to provide input to this Committee.

14. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

15. Adjournment

SE-10, moved by Lynne Cramer, that the meeting adjourn (20:45 hours).

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..... Chair Secretary