

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 19, 2017 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Nancy Bratkovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch (19:15)
Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter
Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired
Suzanne Nurse, Trustee
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living

Members absent (apologies received marked*):

Sue Lawton, Trustee *
Kathy McDonald, Trustee *
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter
Mary Wright, Peel Caring Network for Challenged Kids *

Also present:

Shireen Gul, Peel Elementary Occasional Teachers
Janet McDougald, Chair, Peel DSB

Administration:

Ted Byers, Superintendent of Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)
Poleen Grewal, Associate Director of Instructional and Equity Support Services
Shirley-Ann Teal, Acting Superintendent of Education

Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Ted Byers, assumed the Chair and called the meeting to order. He noted that Trustees Sue Lawton and Suzanne Nurse are returning members, and that Kathy McDonald is the newly elected trustee member on SEAC. He thanked Trustee David Green for his contributions to the Committee during the past year.

(Continued overleaf)

1. Approval of Agenda (Continued)

The following changes were made to the agenda:

- Item 9.1 Superintendent's Report (circulated)
- Item 9.5 Professional Learning for Special Education Staff (added)

SE-01, moved by Shelley Foster, that the agenda, as amended, be approved.

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

2. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Superintendent Byers noted that this is the first SEAC meeting since the Organizational and Second Meetings of the Board, and called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee.

Barbara Cyr nominated Shelley Foster.

There were no further nominations. After observing the standard one minute silence, Superintendent Byers declared that Shelley Foster is acclaimed as Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee for 2017 - 2018.

Shelley Foster assumed the Chair and she called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee.

Barbara Cyr nominated Sue Lawton.

There were no further nominations. After having observed the standard one minute silence, Chair Foster announced that Sue Lawton is acclaimed as Vice-Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee for 2017 - 2018.

3. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

4. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, November 21, 2017

SE-02, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of November 21, 2017, be approved.

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5. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Byers reviewed in detail the information contained in the handout. He acknowledged the dedication and contributions of Coordinating Principal, Ana Pauchulo, who retires on December 31, 2017. He thanked her for her commitment and service to students with special needs. Referring to the Youth Mental Health and Addiction Champion initiative under the Mental Health Strategy, Ted Byers reported on the partnership with Peel Health and the pilot project that will be commencing in 13 secondary schools. Lead teachers and youth champions will receive training and resources under this initiative. Responding to a member's query about the process to identify the 13 secondary schools, Superintendent Byers explained that an email was sent to schools inviting their participation, and the intention was to have one school per superintendency to provide geographical diversity. He confirmed that he will email members with the list of schools. On a question from Chair Foster, he advised that the Ministry has not indicated the intention to continue funding over the longer term.

With regard to decoupling of secondary Developmental Disability (DD) programs, Superintendent Byers explained that the first group of schools has been decoupled. Professional learning was held for five schools, Rick Hansen, Meadowvale, John Fraser, Brampton Centennial and Jean Augustine Secondary Schools, at which DD classes will be decoupled in September 2018. With decoupling, DD programs continue to be part of a network that includes Applewood and Parkholme Schools, but teachers and students belong to the decoupled school. A member asked for an in depth report on profiles of students who continue to attend Applewood and Parkholme Schools.

Regarding budget consultation, Ted Byers stated that he is working with the Finance department and will report back to SEAC on the funding streams for special education. He referred to last year's business cases for the budget, which he had shared with SEAC, and he invited feedback on SEAC priorities.

SE-03, moved by Barbara Byers, that the Superintendent's Report, be received.

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6. Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List

A member queried the rationale for not including members' telephone numbers on the SEAC Member List. During the ensuing discussion, it was noted that, on a request from a member, telephone numbers had been deleted from the list, as this is a public document. The SEAC page on the Board's website displays associations' contact information. Associate Director of Instructional and Equity Support Services, Poleen Grewal, advised that the posting of SEAC members' information on the Board website is a Ministry requirement. Members speaking confirmed that the Member List in SEAC agendas can contain phone numbers, but brochures and the Board's website will display association contact or phone information.

SE-04, moved by Wes McDonald, that the Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List, be received.

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7. **October Report Data**

Superintendent Byers advised that the October Report contains enrolment data as at October 31, 2017 that is provided to the Ministry by school boards. Reviewing the tables and graphs, he highlighted the trend over the past ten years towards an increasing number of non-identified students with special needs. Enrolment data by exceptionality was referred to, and he noted that the number of students identified with Autism and Development Disability has grown by a significant margin. Ted Byers indicated that this increase is reflective of the larger number of students with autism who are identified through the Identification, Placement and Review Committee. He noted the decline in enrolment of students with Language Impairment and Learning Disability, and explained that additional graphs are included in this report in response to suggestions from members at last year's presentation of the October Report Data.

Suggestions from SEAC members included that the exceptionalities be displayed on the pie graph and that data be broken down by grade or primary, junior and intermediate division. A member asked whether non-identification of students will result in inefficient use of funding as students do not receive supports specific to their exceptionality. Superintendent Byers indicated that non-identified students will have Individual Education Plans, and receive program modifications, supports and accommodation. He described reasons as to why an identification may not occur, including age when the exceptionality is evidenced, comprehensive assessment information is not available, or parental preference. Tracy Bardell, Special Education Coordinator, listed the assessment opportunities available through school staff so that there are more points of reference in addition to a professional assessment. She noted that students who appear to need support are tracked monthly, and that this is a consultative process to determine whether the student is to be provided mainstream or itinerant support. Ted Byers explained that the current focus of assessments is on students with autism as they comprise approximately 16% of students with special needs. Chair of the Board, Janet McDougald, referred to the Fix the Formula campaign and described the earlier funding model which required school boards to provide the number of identified students. With the current funding formula, each student is allocated a specific amount of funding, known as the Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA), irrespective of whether or not the student needs special education support. That amount is then allotted to provide special education support throughout the system. Ted Byers added that the Special Equipment Amount and SEPPA are funds received per pupil.

In reply to another member's question, Tracy Bardell advised that students with multiple exceptionalities are reported based on the primary identified need. Responding to a member's request for more detail on non-identified students with special needs, Superintendent Byers explained the difficulty of extracting relevant details for non-identified students from the Student Information System. Associate Director Grewal confirmed that this issue will be discussed with Learning Technology Support Services.

SE-05, moved by Jennifer Knight, that the information re October Report Data, be received.

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8. SEAC Collective Priorities

Superintendent Byers thanked members for their feedback during the consultative discussions held after the October and November 2017 SEAC meetings. He referred to the collective priorities listed in the report, and the three highest priorities, as indicated by members: measurability of student growth; professional learning for exceptionalities/ diagnoses; early identification for gifted. With regard to measurability of student growth, Superintendent Byers noted that the report also lists the ways that growth can be measured for students who access special education support and services. He highlighted differences in success criteria for each exceptionality, and stated that a plan for program evaluation will have to be established for each program and area of exceptionality. Additional ways to measure student growth included: disaggregation of assessment data from report cards and IEPs; perceptual data gathered from parent and teacher surveys; EQAO results; pathways and destinations for special education students. He then shared data for EQAO results for special education students, noting that over five years, Grade 6 results in reading, writing and mathematics increased by 21%, 23% and 16% respectively. Grade 9 applied mathematics results in 2016-2017 improved by 4% over the previous year.

During the discussion that followed, some members commented on the importance of surveying parents of special education students, and gathering information on pathways and post-secondary destinations. Chair Foster suggested that a further discussion on this subject can be scheduled at the next meeting. Superintendent Byers remarked that collection of the data will help to quantify student growth in relation to special education funding. He then read an email from a principal of a school at which the DD program has been decoupled, which provided anecdotal indications of positive outcomes of decoupling.

SE-06, moved by Carol Oitment, that the report re SEAC Collective Priorities, be received.

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Wes McDonald retired from the meeting at 20:45 hours.

9. Professional Learning for Special Education Staff

Tracy Bardell reviewed the above-noted report circulated to members, which provided a high level overview of professional learning and plans in progress. She reported on job embedded training for special education teachers of students in inclusive placement and special class placement. She stated that, in addition, for inclusive placement teachers, training is provided through the In School Support Program (ISSP) Institute, and New Teachers Induction Program. Training is also provided on Individual Education Plan, and for French Immersion ISSP teachers. For special class placement, GLD class teachers receive training on assistive technology, and plans are being finalized for a professional learning day for GLD teachers. In response to a member's question, Tracy Bardell indicated that information received during the training is available online through SharePoint, which can be accessed by teachers. The training material is categorized and searchable online, and Board staff are working towards making the site more user-friendly.

9. Professional Learning for Special Education Staff

SE-07, moved by Jennifer Knight, that the report re Professional Learning for Special Education Staff, be received.

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10. Question Period

Carol Ogilvie advised that subsidized psychological assessments are provided through the Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region.

11. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

12. Adjournment

Superintendent Byers wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

SE-08, moved by Jennifer Knight, that the meeting adjourn (21:00 hours).

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RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, held December 19, 2017, there were no recommendations to the Board.

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

1. Election of SEAC Chair and Vice-Chair

Shelley Foster was elected Chair and Sue Lawton was elected Vice-Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee for 2017 - 2018.

2. Reports / Information Received

The Committee received the following reports/information: Superintendent's Report; Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List; October Report Data; SEAC Collective Priorities; Professional Learning for Special Education Staff.

Prepared by:

Nicole Fernandes
Board Reporter

Submitted by:

Ted Byers
Superintendent of Special Education Support Services
