

## 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, February 16, 2016 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada, Chair  
Nancy Bratkovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch  
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter  
David Green, Trustee  
Sue Lawton, Trustee  
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter  
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region  
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter  
Harkirat Singh, Trustee  
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living  
Mary Wright, Peel Caring Network for Challenged Kids

Absent: (apologies received marked \*)

Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, Vice-Chair\*  
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario\*  
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired  
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario\*

Also present:

Stan Cameron, Trustee  
Robert Crocker, Trustee  
Karen Del Ben, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel  
Fauzia Reza, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter (Alternate)

Administration:

Ted Byers, Superintendent of Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)  
Pertia Minott, Superintendent of Education (Executive Member Back-up)

Marina Amin, Board Reporter

### 1. Approval of Agenda

SE-19, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that the agenda be approved.

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**2. Conflict of Interest**

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

**3. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, January 19, 2016**

SE-20, moved by Nancy Leaton, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, held January 19, 2016, be approved.

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**4. Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Ted Byers, welcomed Julie Tidman, Coordinating Vice-Principal for Section 23 classes, noting that she has recently joined the Special Education department. Recalling information provided at the last meeting about the Student Needs Assessment Form (SNAF), and questions raised about the allocation process and effective use of Teaching Assistants (TAs) in schools, Superintendent Byers reported that a research study is being undertaken to assess the process for allocation of TAs. He advised that Lindy Zaretsky, a Consultant at Reaching Education Resolutions Inc., will review the current allocation practice from a sufficiency, efficiency, and effectiveness standpoint. She will poll staff at approximately 60 schools, both elementary and secondary, to ascertain whether the TA allocation process is meeting administrative needs. Results and feedback will be brought back to this Committee. Acknowledging input from members, Superintendent Byers invited SEAC's involvement in the study being conducted by Lindy Zaretsky. Members expressed interest in the Committee's involvement in the study, and some offered to represent SEAC on the study group.

SE-21, moved by Ann Smith, that the Superintendent's Report (oral), be received.

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**5. Special Education Plan Development – Staff Development Plans**

Superintendent Byers stated that one of the priorities from the list identified by SEAC for discussion and review in developing the Board's Special Education Plan is related to staff development. He noted that, as a result of several meetings with department staff, and to better explain staff development plans, a visual was created that outlines the tiered approach to staff training in order to build knowledge and skills that will support staff and students. Describing the different levels of support, Superintendent Byers advised that workshops can be reformatted into this tiered model.

Reviewing the graphic outlining the tiered approach strategy, Coordinator of Special Programs, Gillian Kajganich, highlighted the continuous professional development opportunities offered to teachers and TAs, including training modules which are regularly updated, and which teaching assistants are required to complete.

## **5. Special Education Plan Development – Staff Development Plans (Continued)**

Gillian Kajganich spoke about job-embedded training to better support teaching practice and student achievement, and described the proactive processes that are used at the universal and targeted approach levels. She explained that in-depth learning takes place at the intensive level, and noted that TAs generally work with the more vulnerable students in the Board.

Commenting on the tiered approach, a member suggested that a detailed explanation of professional development be offered, so as to distinguish it from the tiered approach used for intervention with students. Suggestions were noted and the Special Education Staff Development Plan will be brought back to the Committee.

A handout summarizing the Board's Mental Health Strategy, and the draft version of Supporting Minds 2013, an educator's guide to promoting students' mental health and well-being, was circulated. Providing background information, Superintendent of Education, Pertia Minott, stated that the Ministry document, Open Minds, Healthy Minds, provides the context for implementation and development of a mental health support strategy in the Board, and she highlighted the four guiding goals: improve mental health and well-being for all Ontarians; create healthy, resilient, inclusive communities; identify mental health and addictions problems early and intervene; provide timely, high quality, integrated, person-directed health and other human services. Superintendent Minott spoke about School Mental Health ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) which promotes mental health well-being with a focus on leadership capacity building and implementation supports.

Reviewing the handout, Coordinator of Student Well-Being, Maureen MacKay, provided details of the Board's Mental Health Strategy, which commenced in May 2012 with System Mapping and the creation of a Mental Health Steering Committee and Working table. She outlined five mental health priorities that the Board will focus on: to actively promote mental health awareness and decrease stigma across the system; to promote a broad understanding of suicide prevention, intervention and postvention; to develop a deeper understanding of what mental health means in the diverse community groups; continue to promote and deepen collaborative working relationships; increase the system's responsiveness to mental health needs. Maureen Mackay described the various resources, including training modules and workshops, being developed to bring awareness and build capacity to support mental health issues. She spoke about discussion with focus groups consisting of parents and students to better understand their issues and needs, so as to help families get past all barriers. More than 200 faith-based leaders have been trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental illness, and through Community Care Access Centres (CCAC), Peel has access to seven mental health and addiction nurses, who assist with transitioning students back to the school environment. Maureen MacKay also provided details about the Ontario Telemedicine Network partnership with the Hospital for Sick Kids in the area of telepsychiatry. She spoke of plans to extend support to the Syrian refugees arriving in Ontario, and to work with School Mental Health ASIST to get province wide support.

**5. Special Education Plan Development – Staff Development Plans (Continued)**

Members questions of clarification were responded to by the administration, including Children’s Aid Society (CAS) partnered with Peel in system mapping; parents, guardians, and foster parents are welcome to attend training events held in Peel schools; CCAC mental health addiction nurses generally meet with the student within 48 hours. Responding to a member’s query about using the services of a Behaviour Mobile Team, Maureen MacKay advised that teachers have a keen understanding of the students they work with and develop an expertise that supports their needs. She highlighted that all Peel schools have social workers and psychologists who support students in need. Chief Social Worker, Jim Van Buskirk, provided details of the Joint Protocol for Student Achievement (JPSA), a Ministry initiative designed to support the most vulnerable students, in view of concerns about the decreased graduation rate of Ontario’s Crown Wards. The JPSA is intended to enable collaboration between Children’s Aid Societies and school boards, so that when students in the care of or receiving services from CAS register in school, a plan of action is developed that will improve their prospects for graduation.

SE-22, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that the report re Special Education Plan Development – Staff Development Plans, be received.

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**6. Operating Procedure SEPS 17**

Providing an overview of the Operating Procedure SEPS 17 “Procedures for Dealing with Students Exhibiting High Risk Behavioural Difficulties,” Superintendent Byers, stated that the draft revisions to the procedure include the tiered approach to behaviour intervention, a broadened description of alternative learning environments to support behavior plans, more details about additional programs and supports for students and staff. He highlighted sections in the report relating to protocol for students transitioning to new settings; strategies to be used at the Tier I, II and III levels, including safety plans; procedure to be followed for students exhibiting more unsafe behavior; responding to students exhibiting alcohol substance abuse; tips and response protocol for dealing with non-suicidal self-injury; facts, guidance and process with respect to suicide prevention, intervention and postvention.

Superintendent Byers responded to members’ questions, explaining the strategies used and processes in place to support students exhibiting high risk behavior. He indicated that excluded students do not always have a community case conference, and staff look for a safe pathway back to school that supports the student’s integration. This may involve a community partner, telepsychiatry, or other human resources that can be brought to the skillset. Superintendent Byers stated that students in the Tier III program come with multiple exceptionalities and needs, and noted that an exclusion is a temporary situation until the required supports are in place for the student to be successful. A member explained the challenges involved in setting a timeframe for exclusion, as this includes conversations with the parents and developing a specific plan that will be beneficial to the student. Another member asked whether a report can be presented to SEAC annually regarding excluded students, and average duration of an exclusion.

**6. Operating Procedure SEPS 17 (Continued)**

SE-23, moved by Sue Lawton, that the report re Operating Procedure SEPS 17, be received.

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**7. Question Period**

Barbara Cyr confirmed that a presentation table will be provided to SEAC at the Numeracy Conference on April 2, 2016, and that brochures for display should be forwarded to her by March 29, 2016, or brought to Rick Hansen Secondary School, after 4 p.m. on April 2, 2016. She also asked for volunteer assistance at the SEAC workshop.

Barbara Cyr asked about the SEAC meeting being scheduled on March 29, 2016. She stated that, if the meeting is being moved because of a religious celebration, it is incorrect, since the religious celebration is on March 24, 2016.

Ann Smith asked about “Learning for All” training programs. Gillian Kajganich explained that training and professional development is within the “Growing Success” framework, and creating success criteria for meeting the needs of every student.

Dorothy Peddie inquired about when the updates to the Ministry’s Special Needs Strategy will become available. It was noted that the Special Needs Strategy Group will be presenting to the Ministry in April, after which feedback will be brought back to this Committee. A Ministry plan is expected for possible implementation in the 2017-2018 school year.

**8. Public Question Period**

There were no public questions.

**9. Adjournment**

SE-24, moved by Nancy Bratkovic, that the meeting adjourn (20:30 hours).

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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At a meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, held February 16, 2016, there were no recommendations to the Board.

### **FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

#### **1. Reports / Information Received**

The Committee received the following reports/information: Superintendent's Report (oral); Special Education Plan Development – Staff Development Plans; Operating Procedure SEPS 17.

Prepared by:

Marina Amin  
Board Reporter

Submitted by:

Ted Byers  
Superintendent of Special Education Support Services

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