

## 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 18, 2014 at 19:00 hours.

### Members present:

Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada, Chair  
Nancy Bratkovic, Canadian Mental Health Association  
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children  
Meredith Johnson, Trustee (19:10)  
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario  
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario Peel Chapter  
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario  
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living  
Lorraine Yuill, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region  
Mary Wright, Peel Caring Network for Challenged Kids

### Absent: (apologies received marked\*)

Stan Cameron, Trustee, Vice-Chair\*  
Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children  
Brad MacDonald, Trustee  
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for Blind and Visually Impaired Children\*  
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada – Peel Chapter

### Also present:

Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region (Alternate)  
Fauzia Reza, Autism Ontario Peel Chapter (Alternate)  
Linda Standish, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel

### Administration:

Louise Sirisko, Superintendent, Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)  
Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

### 1. Approval of Agenda

Chair Byers welcomed Fauzia Reza, Alternate representative for Autism Ontario Peel Chapter, and staff and student teachers from York University.

SE-18, moved by Barbara Cyr, 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 21, 2014**

It was noted that Carol Ogilvie, Alternate representative for Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region, was present at the meeting.

SE-19, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of January 21, 2014, be approved.

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**4. Notice of Motion re Fix the Formula Campaign**

Barbara Cyr delivered the following notice of motion:

“That the Special Education Advisory Committee send a letter to the Minister of Education in support of the Peel DSB’s Fix the Formula campaign”.

With the approval of Committee members, the motion was discussed at the meeting.

SE-20, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the Special Education Advisory Committee send a letter to the Minister of Education in support of the Peel DSB’s Fix the Formula campaign.

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Chair Byers noted that, at the last SEAC meeting, Fix the Formula campaign materials were provided by the Communications department. Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Louise Sirisko, advised that the Communications department can help with customizing a letter from SEAC to the Minister in support of the Board’s campaign. A member asked that a draft letter be provided to SEAC members for approval, and Superintendent Sirisko confirmed that the draft will be sent to members by email for their feedback and approval.

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SE-20

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**5. Toronto DSB – A Case for Inclusive Education**

Superintendent Sirisko indicated that the above-mentioned research report prepared by the Toronto DSB was the result of a two year review of services for students with special needs. The report makes a case for moving in the direction of greater inclusion of special education students into general education classrooms. She noted that, while there needs to be more discussion on the topic, this report is a literature review of important factors affecting inclusive education. Superintendent Sirisko requested members to take the report to their associations, and bring back input on “Here’s what”, “So what”, and “Now what”, in terms of how the report applies to Peel and next steps.

**5. Toronto DSB – A Case for Inclusive Education (Continued)**

Providing an overview, Superintendent Sirisko explained that the report highlights the emergence of inclusive education as one of the most important issues in special education in school boards around the world, based on literature and findings. She noted that, while there is a lack of empirical research on the transition process to assist school boards to move to inclusive education, there is a successful model on promoting inclusion. Findings support the view that the quality of education is lower with segregated models. While international literature does not suggest that inclusion works for all students all the time, the overall trends show that students with special education needs generally fare the same or better in inclusive education settings with no negative impact on students without special needs.

Superintendent Sirisko indicated that the report discusses steps school boards should take to make the change to inclusion. For the purpose of the review, contact was made with the Canadian Association of Community Living who had conducted extensive research in the area of inclusive education, and Gordon Porter, Director of Inclusive Education at the Association and a former Chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission. The recommendation to the Toronto DSB was to make the move by piloting inclusive education in each of their families of schools, and grow from there. Strategies and approaches to inclusion in the classroom are also discussed in the report, as well as the inclusion of students with specific exceptionalities, such as Autism, learning disabilities, mild intellectual disabilities, and behaviour disorders. Superintendent Sirisko advised that the report speaks about the significant time taken to label students with exceptionalities, which instead can be focused on serving the students. The report indicates that one of the key proponents of inclusive education is the reduction of contained classes, and the promotion of grouping between and within classes.

Superintendent Sirisko explained that the report provides highlights of inclusive education models adopted at school boards in Canada and the United States, such as, New Brunswick Department of Education, Yukon Department of Education, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB, Syracuse City School District, and New York City Department of Education. Reporting that the inclusive education approach aligns with human rights principals, she noted that collaborative teaching is the foundation of an inclusive model and can be designed to support student goals. Superintendent Sirisko advised that a significant amount of time will be dedicated at the next meeting to discuss and reflect upon inclusive education for children with special needs.

SE-21, moved by Ann Smith, that the report re Toronto DSB – A Case for Inclusive Education, be received.

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**6. Assistive Technology in Peel**

Susan Bassili, Chief Speech-Language Pathologist, introduced Karen Haight, Speech-Language Pathologist in the ASD Team – North, and reported that Karen Haight will demonstrate the use of iPads to facilitate communication skills for students in the Autism Spectrum Disorder.

**6. Assistive Technology in Peel (Continued)**

Karen Haight reported that a number of iPads were purchased and significant research was undertaken on Apps that will be helpful for the students. She highlighted the Apps developed by Kindergarten.com and Different Roads to Learning which help in labeling items and understanding vocabulary. Stating that these are being recommended for use in schools, she indicated that the Apps track student progress and that students need supervision when working on their tasks. Karen Haight reviewed the social skills and routines Apps, including Social Skills Sampler, Scene Speak, and Clicker Books. She provided information on communication Apps, such as Proloquo2Go and GoTalkNOW, and on the cause and effect Apps, such as Art of Glow, Congas, Heat Pad, and Fluidity. She advised that these Apps are covered by Special Equipment Amount (SEA) funding, and support students who need improvement on their oral and written skills. A member asked about accessibility for students whose disabilities do not allow them to use these Apps. Ana Pauchulo, Special Education Coordinating Principal, confirmed that the Board is willing to explore ideas and technology to support students with special needs.

SE-22, moved by Meredith Johnson, that the oral report re use of Assistive Technology in Peel, be received.

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**7. Transitions – Board Improvement Plan - Update**

Ana Pauchulo, Special Education Coordinating Principal, provided an oral update report on the progress on the Board Improvement Plan (BIP) for transitions. She indicated that SEAC members' feedback will be obtained on some aspects of the BIP.

Ana Pauchulo stated that the third phase of the BIP will commence in September 2014 and will consist of an update to the transitions plan upgrade. She noted that the use of assessment tools will help itinerant teachers to link the development of learning to the Individual Education Plan (IEP), the goals and the communication plan. She highlighted pertinent legislations, including PPM 140 regarding transitions for students with ASD, the Integration Transitions Planning Protocol for students with developmental disabilities who are 14 years or older, and PPM 156 relating to Kindergarten-Grade 12 students who have an IEP or special education needs. She stated that staff are investigating modifications to the transition plan in the IEP Writer module to accommodate PPM 156, and are reviewing feedback from participating boards and collaborating with other Coordinators at the Board. Ana Pauchulo indicated that feedback from SEAC is invited on student transition needs for different student profiles, including, upon entry to school, between grades, between program area or subject, moving between schools, elementary to secondary and beyond.

Cathy White indicated that, from her experiences with Autism Ontario, the most frequent and important message from parents is the need for ongoing communication and collaboration. She also noted the importance of evaluating the progress of the transition plan on an ongoing basis, with adjustments made, as required. Referring to feedback collected from principals, Cathy White confirmed that there has been a steady improvement in the transition plan over the years. She explained that developing timelines early also helps to plan in advance, and evidence indicates that, in order for transition plans to work well, there needs to be cross over between departments and agencies.

**7. Transitions – Board Improvement Plan – Update (Continued)**

Cathy White reported that references available on this subject will be sent out electronically together with template information to guide the feedback from SEAC. Ana Pauchulo confirmed that feedback will be collated and brought back for discussion at the April SEAC meeting.

SE-23, moved by Nancy Leaton, that the oral update report re Transitions – Board Improvement Plan, be received.

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**8. Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List**

SE-24, moved by Mary Wright, that the Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List, be received.

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**9. Communications**

SE-25, moved by Lorraine Yuill, that the following communications, be received:

1. Letter from Autism Ontario – Peel Chapter re nomination of Fauzia Reza as its alternate SEAC representative on the Special Education Advisory Committee
2. Letter from Janet McDougald to confirm Fauzia Reza as Autism Ontario – Peel Chapter’s alternate SEAC representative on the Special Education Advisory Committee
3. 2014 Summit – Children and Youth Mental Health
4. Letters to Peel MPPs from Jim Triantafilou, Executive Director of Brampton Caledon Community Living re Inequity in Funding for Special Education students in Peel

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Referring to Item 9.3, Maureen MacKay, Special Education Coordinator, invited SEAC members to attend the Summit on Children and Youth Mental Health, hosted by the Ontario Public School Boards’ Association.

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SE-25

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**10. Special Presentation re Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario**

Leanne Philbert presented on behalf of Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. She indicated that Jessica Bigda, Manager of Programs and Services, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region (LDAPR) was unable to attend. Leanne Philbert provided brief background information on her work with LDAPR, indicating that she is a registered social worker in the outreach program.

**10. Special Presentation re Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (Continued)**

Speaking of the programs and services offered by LDAPR, Leanne Philbert reported that parents call up the Association asking for support for their children who are struggling at school and have a learning disability diagnosis. She noted that LDAPR offers a library of resources, workshops and conferences to support parents. She reported on support provided to youth and children, and highlighted the services offered through the Social Skills Program, Computer Program, Positive Conflict Resolution Program, Assistive Technology Program, Youth Group and Academic Support Program. Information on fees and duration of the programs were provided by Leanne Philbert. She reported that the Association is accepting registrations for the spring programs, including those held at satellite locations. The LDAPR brochure was circulated, and she stated that one of the goals for the future is the expansion of LDAPR programs to Caledon residents through satellite locations. She noted that the Association has a strong social media presence, and she invited members to follow on Twitter and Facebook. In response to a question on disseminating the information to school councils, Leanne Philbert indicated that the program guide contains all details, including on membership, and information is also posted on the association's website.

SE-26, moved by Carol Oitment, that the Special Presentation re Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario, be received.

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**11. Question Period**

Lorraine Yuill asked whether any Peel secondary schools are participating in the School Support Initiative. Superintendent Sirisko reported that the Ministry has invited two additional secondary schools to join the initiative. Patricia Rossall, Superintendent of Education, Alternative Programs, will choose the schools, and Superintendent Sirisko confirmed that she will follow up and share information about the School Support Initiative for students at risk.

Barbara Cyr reported that the Parent Literacy Conference will be held on March 29, 2014, at Mississauga Secondary School. She indicated that a SEAC workshop will be offered, as in previous years, and invited members to join her at the workshop, to be held in two sessions. She also invited members to forward to her brochures and flyers for distribution at the conference.

**12. Public Question Period**

There were no public questions.

**13. Adjournment**

SE-27, moved by Meredith Johnson, that the meeting adjourn (20:35 hours).

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..... Chair ..... Secretary