

## **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 19, 2019 at 19:05 hours.

### Members present:

Shelley Foster, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children, Chair  
Sue Lawton, Trustee, Vice-Chair  
Nicole Buckett, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada  
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter  
Zeshan Khan, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region  
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario  
Michelle Lewis, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch  
Kathy McDonald, Trustee  
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired  
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario  
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter  
Fauzia Reza, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter  
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living  
Mary Wright, Down Syndrome Association of Peel

### Member absent: (apologies received marked\*)

John Marchant, Trustee\*

### Also present:

Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter (Alternate)  
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region (Alternate)  
Laura Smith, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel

### Administration:

Shawn Moynihan, Superintendent, Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)  
Joy Uniac, Superintendent, Social/Emotional Learning and Early Years (Executive Back-up Member)  
Peter Joshua, Director of Education

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

**1. Approval of Agenda**

SE-17, moved by Sue Lawton, 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 15, 2019**

SE-18, moved by Ann Smith, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of January 15, 2019, be approved.

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**4. Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Shawn Moynihan, thanked SEAC members for participating in the positive discussion held earlier today and noted that the items discussed can be revisited in March 2019. He introduced Lisa Brasil, Special Education Coordinator for the secondary panel. Superintendent Moynihan stated that two accessibility related reports, namely, feedback on accessibility issues with the student census, and the report on accessibility, will be brought to the SEAC meeting in March 2019 as well as to a Physical Planning and Building Committee Meeting.

Shawn Moynihan invited Katina Paleologos, Coordinating Principal, Special Education Support Services, responsible for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) programs, to provide an update report. Katina Paleologos reported that the Ministry has not yet announced funding changes and that schools continue to work closely with families and selected service providers to support students. She described the work being done, which includes: collaborating with Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) transition facilitators; determining individual goals and skills needed at home and in the community; ensuring consistency and effectiveness; establishing strategies around generalization of goals; classroom consultation and general learning for classroom teachers to build capacity and support parents; developing Family Service Plans.

SE-19, moved by Carol Oitment, that the Superintendent's Report (oral), be received.

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## **5. Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region (LDAPR) - Overview**

Executive Director of Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region, Maria Reolin, circulated the LDAPR 2017-2018 Community Impact Report. Noting that there are Learning Disabilities chapters all over Ontario, she reviewed their goal, which is to advance the full participation of children, youth and adults with Learning Disabilities (LD). Using PowerPoint slides, Maria Reolin explained what a reading disability may look like, and stated that 1 in 10 Canadian children have a learning disability. Reviewing the evolution of the learning disability definition, Maria Reolin explained the concept of specific learning disabilities (SLD), which may occur in combination with other disabling conditions. She advised that developmental disability, hearing or vision impairments, socio-economic factors, cultural differences, and lack of language proficiency are not causes of LD. She described the possible causes of LD, such as heredity, issues arising during pregnancy or at birth, or accidents after birth. Maria Reolin listed some secondary implications of having an LD as, low self-esteem, impact on family functions and relationships, and children not reaching their full potential. She stated that generally an LD is diagnosed when the child starts school, and some signs include, slow reading and writing rates, poor memory, difficulty following directions, inability to complete assignments on time, and frequent spelling errors. With the help of slides, she reviewed LDAPR's programming and services, which include individualized programs such as, academic support, Reading Rocks, Orton-Gillingham remediation, and psycho-educational assessments.

Responding to questions of clarification from members, Maria Reolin advised that, due to difficulty in navigating the social service system, students are often referred to LDAPR by the school principal or teacher, and intellectual disability goes beyond the scope of learning disability. She clarified that Brampton residents are able to avail of psycho-educational assessments conducted by partnered psychologists, and families are eligible through LDAPR, based on household income. Members were invited to peruse the LDAPR website for more information.

SE-20, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the report re Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region – Overview, be received.

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## **6. Poverty Indicators Connected to Special Education Plan**

Paul Favaro, Chief of Research and Evaluation, Research and Accountability, stated that the Socioeconomic Vulnerability Index (SVI) replaces the Social Risk Index (SRI). Information collected is being shared across the Peel system to assist with planning and the budget process. Describing the methodology, Paul Favaro advised that data sources include, Environ Analytics, Canada Census, EQAO and OSSLT assessments, graduation rates, and Peel DSB's School Information System (SIS). Over 40 variables were also considered and correlated with student success and student learning. Using a slide presentation, Paul Favaro reviewed the interrelationship between SRI and SVI and noted that the SVI variables were reduced to five, to remove overlap of measurements. He listed the variables as, median household income, living in poverty, without high school diploma, with university degree, and homeownership, and he explained why they measure socioeconomic vulnerability in a reliable way. Three additional descriptive factors taken into account were unemployment, racialized groups, and new immigrants.

**6. Poverty Indicators Connected to Special Education Plan (Continued)**

Speaking on the measures of socioeconomic vulnerability, Paul Favaro advised that average vulnerability is defined at postal code level, of students attending a particular school and not students in the community around a school. Charts were reviewed on SVI by neighbourhood, percent of most vulnerable students, percent of students successful by SVI percentile and percent of most vulnerable Peel DSB students by neighbourhood. He highlighted that student success and achievement is directly proportionate to social capital. The average SVI score was broken down into six clusters, from low to very high, and it was noted that almost every school in Peel has some percentage of poverty. Reviewing a chart on elementary and secondary school results by SVI cluster, Paul Favaro encouraged members to note the differences in data across two measures, Average SVI and Percent Most Vulnerable, and the five variables. He advised that the next step is to consider data from the student census which will be available in Fall 2019 or early 2020.

In reply to a question it was noted that the findings will be used to support the Poverty Action Plan, identification of gifted students, allocation of resources, access to programming, decision-making at a local level, and provide opportunity to review data trends at school and central levels. Responses to further questions of clarification included that: school staff are aware of and respond to individual needs of students and families; tracking of student achievement was done based on SRI; data on multi-family homes is captured by income tax data filed; data for special education students can be obtained from the student census; accommodations were made for students with intellectual disability to participate in the student census including a consent procedure. A flyer on Poverty Indicators in Peel was circulated. Members participated in small group discussions on the average SVI score and poverty profiles of schools. Feedback on suggestions for an action plan and next steps was collected. A member suggested that in view of the Board's commitment to equity and inclusion, SEAC can submit a request for a budget case for hiring staff to address the situation of 15% of students who are most vulnerable.

SE-21, moved by Mary Wright, that the report re Poverty Indicators Connected to Special Education Plan, be received.

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**7. Communications: Letter from Durham District School Board SEAC Chair to Minister of Education, Lisa M. Thompson**

SE-22, moved by Sue Lawton, that the communications item re Letter from Durham District School Board SEAC Chair to Minister of Education, Lisa M. Thompson, be received.

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**8. Response of Administration to Former Questions re Process for Appointment to Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)**

Referring to the report provided in the package, Superintendent Moynihan reviewed the proposed steps to work with Leadership Development and School Support Services, to revise the process for appointment to the IPRC. Barbara Cyr inquired as to how the members of the IPRC are chosen, and the qualifications and training required. She indicated that committee members did not have special education qualifications and may not be knowledgeable about the exceptionalities. Shawn Moynihan replied that the training, experience, and qualifications are reviewed during the application process, and that there are various ways in which members can obtain special education information, such as through graduate work. He expressed interest in receiving input from the member. Chair Foster commented that IPRC members should be familiar with special education.

SE-23, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the Response of Administration to Former Questions re Process for Appointment to Identification, Placement and Review Committee, be received.

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**9. Reports from Representatives on Councils/Associations**

Barbara Cyr reported that the Parent Involvement Committee is hosting an event on Saturday, March 30, 2019, for School Council Members, and SEAC has been invited to have a display table among other exhibitors. Suggesting that it is a good idea to display resources at this event, Barbara Cyr asked for a volunteer to oversee the table from 8.30 a.m. to 12.40 p.m. Interested members may contact her by email.

**10. Question Period**

Zeshan Khan inquired about professional development activities related to special education, in relation to PPM151. He also asked for an update report on possible reductions in funding and program cutbacks. Superintendent Moynihan offered to bring back a response to the next SEAC meeting.

**11. Public Question Period**

There were no questions.

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Special Education Advisory Committee:lf

**12. Adjournment**

SE-24, moved by Ann Smith, that the meeting adjourn (21:20 hours).

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