

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 20, 2018 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, Chair
Sue Lawton, Trustee, Vice-Chair
Nancy Bratkovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Kathy McDonald, Trustee (19:05)
Suzanne Nurse, Trustee
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter (19:10)
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Mary Wright, Down Syndrome Association of Peel

Members absent: (apologies received)

Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada
Thomas Corbett, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired

Administration:

Ted Byers, Superintendent of Special Education Support Services
Poleen Grewal, Associate Director, Instructional and Equity Support Services
Peter Joshua, Director of Education
Shirley-Ann Teal, Acting Superintendent of Education

Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

SE-16, moved by Carol Oitment, 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 16, 2018

SE-17, moved by Mary Wright, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of January 16, 2018, be approved.

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4. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Ted Byers, circulated his report, and reviewed amendments to the Child, Youth and Family Services Act with regard to raising the age of protection to 18 years. The Act, enacted on January 1, 2018, comes into effect in the spring of 2018. With the changes, a full range of protection services will be provided to children up to their 18th birthday, when found to be in need of protection. Duty to report provisions for 16 and 17 year olds will be that a "person may report", and eligibility criteria will be the same for all children.

Superintendent Byers reported on the Everyday Mental Health in the Classroom resource, which was developed by School Mental Health Assist and the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. He indicated that Peel was one of the pilot boards, and a Peel teacher was on the writing team. An evaluation of the material will be undertaken with pilot boards, and province-wide distribution is expected in the fall of 2018. Ted Byers noted that the resource contains 12 evidence-based practices and activities, and he confirmed that the resource can be demonstrated at the next SEAC meeting.

Superintendent Byers thanked Chair Foster and Vice-Chair Lawton for the useful discussions on SEAC agendas, and a member suggested including presentations from schools with successful special education services. Activities at the professional development day on February 6, 2018, were briefly highlighted.

SE-18, moved by Ann Smith, that the Superintendent's Report, be received.

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5. Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List

Superintendent Byers advised that the Special Education brochure is being finalized, and he asked members to confirm that the information contained in the above-noted list is accurate. Association emails and telephone numbers, if available, will be printed on the brochure. Home addresses and telephone numbers of members, with exceptions as requested by some members, will be not be included in the brochure.

SE-19, moved by Carol Oitment, that the Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List, be received.

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6. Special Education Advisory Committee Priorities

Referring to discussions between him and the Chair and Vice-Chair, and at recent SEAC meetings regarding priorities, Superintendent Byers noted that, in addition to big ideas identified, some other suggestions were also made. These included a SEAC newsletter, to share with the community the work of SEAC and the Special Education department, and to invite continued involvement from parents. He asked members whether they were still interested in pursuing this initiative, or some other ideas.

A member suggested that a SEAC newsletter be added to school newsletters currently sent home with students, and that Board staff be made available to assist with the newsletter. During the discussion that followed, SEAC members offered comments and suggestions with regard to determining next steps, including: setting up a sub-committee of SEAC with charge of publishing the newsletter; whether the full membership of SEAC should review the newsletter; frequency of publication, e.g. monthly; SEAC newsletters be sent to school councils and the Parent Involvement Committee, and a link posted on the SEAC webpage; whether Board approval is required regarding the content. Superintendent Byers reported that he had discussed this topic with Carla Pereira, Director of Communications and Community Relations Support Services, who indicated that the Board has camera-ready articles for newsletters which can be customized for SEAC newsletters, and SEAC newsletters can be posted on the Board's website, or school websites. A member suggested that a SEAC newsletter sub-committee be struck and a meeting with the Communications department scheduled before the next SEAC meeting. Chair Foster, Nancy Bratkovic, Thomas Corbett and Dorothy Peddie were named to the sub-committee, and Vice-Chair Lawton will coordinate with Communications department regarding a meeting and next steps.

Referring to the PAAC on SEAC conference held two years ago, a member noted that there were good ideas discussed, which can be brought forward to the next SEAC meeting. With regard to the parent survey, but Superintendent Byers clarified that this will be a staff initiative, and that details will be brought to a future meeting.

SE-20, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that the report re Special Education Advisory Committee Priorities, be received.

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7. Budget Consultation

Superintendent Byers referred to the presentation at the previous meeting by Finance staff on the special education budget. He noted that the next steps are discussions with SEAC to identify priorities, and the business cases being developed by the Special Education department. He circulated the list of business cases submitted by him to the 2017-2018 budget development process, and invited SEAC members to discuss priorities for this years' budget process.

7. **Budget Consultation** (Continued)

Members offered suggestions and comments, including: resubmitting business cases for transition facilitator, ASD and DD Consultant allocation increase, and ASD and DD Itinerant allocation increase; itinerant teacher for Gifted; additional support for social work department; additional funding for professional learning for specific exceptionalities, e.g. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome disorders, Down Syndrome, and students with exceptionalities having smaller populations; incorporating the Mental Health in the Classrooms initiative into strategies to leverage learning in the classroom; facilitating networking and sharing of practices among staff; renewing electronic forums, e.g. SharePoint, to facilitate ready access to information and best practices; ensuring that student profiles and formative assessments follow the student. Ted Byers recalled that, at the previous Committee meeting, a question was asked with regard to the census data, and percentage of special education funding based on 2006 and 2011 census data. He noted that, apart from 7.6% of the total Measures of Variability component calculated with 2011 census data, an overwhelming majority of the funding is calculated using 2006 census data for demographics.

Chair Foster suggested that members can consult with their associations with regard to priorities. Superintendent Byers indicated that end March 2018 is the deadline for submission to the budget development process. He confirmed that SEAC input can be discussed at the next meeting as well. Vice-Chair Lawton remarked that staff work hard to provide programs and services, and that during the budget development process, SEAC is one of the significant areas of priority. The Ministry needs to hear from SEAC and associations about concerns regarding 2006 census data being used.

SE-21, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that due to significant population changes in Peel since 2006, SEAC, with support from the Special Education department, send a letter to the Ministry of Education, with copies to MPPs, expressing dissatisfaction regarding the use of outdated census data in special education funding calculations, as this negatively impacts the provision of equitable programs and services for special education students.

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8. **Transportation Update**

Superintendent Byers reviewed the documentation attached to the above-noted report pertaining to the Board's campaign regarding school bus delays. A member proposed that SEAC write a letter in support of the campaign. Some members spoke about their experiences due to school bus delays, and there was discussion regarding the hardships faced by many parents. SEAC Vice-Chair Lawton indicated that, while there are no other contractors offering school transportation, better terms and conditions may be negotiated during contract renewal which is commencing soon. She added that the Ministry has two committees working on this issue. Members briefly discussed the letter that will be drafted from SEAC. Board Vice-Chair Suzanne Nurse indicated that the purpose of the campaign is to bring attention to the matter of chronic school bus delays, and she encouraged SEAC and members' associations to collaborate with the Board on the transportation campaign.

8. Transportation Update (Continued)

SE-22, moved by Carol Oitment, that the Special Education Advisory Committee support the Board's transportation campaign regarding the ongoing school bus delays by writing letters to the Ministry of Education and to the Special Education Advisory Committees of the 75 school boards.

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9. Letter from Director of Education and President, SEAC of Conseil Scolaire Catholique Franco-Nord

Members perused the above-referred letter. In response to a member's question, Superintendent Byers reported that there has been a pause on the Special Needs Strategy. The Special Needs Strategy Planning Committee held two meetings with representation from several groups, including educators and Professional School Support Personnel. Two specialized service coordinators have been hired and are working with Erinoak Kids. Ted Byers offered to bring back an update report on the Special Needs Strategy.

SE-23, moved by Jennifer Knight, that Letter from Director of Education and President, SEAC of Conseil Scolaire Catholique Franco-Nord, be received.

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10. Question Period

Barbara Cyr reported that the Parent Empowering Modern Learners Conference will be held on March 24, 2018 at Mississauga Secondary School, and that SEAC has set up a display table. She invited members to bring documents to the next meeting to display at the table, and she asked whether members were interested in staffing the table.

11. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

12. Adjournment

SE-24, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that the meeting adjourn (21:25 hours).

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