

February 21, 2017
Special Education Advisory Committee:lf

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 21, 2017 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, Chair
Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada
Nancy Bratkovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch
David Green, Trustee
Karen Kennedy, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Sue Lawton, Trustee, Vice-Chair
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter
Suzanne Nurse, Trustee
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Mary Wright, Peel Caring Network for Challenged Kids

Members absent:

Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired

Also present:

Michelle Anderson, Peel Principals and Vice-Principals Association
Karen Del Ben, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel
Karen Hobbins, Peel Association of Secondary School Principals
Rod Marijan, Peel Elementary Occasional Teachers
Kathy McDonald, Trustee
Daniele Roch, Peel Elementary Teachers' Local

Administration:

Ted Byers, Superintendent of Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

SE-16, moved by Nancy Leaton, 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 17, 2017

SE-17, moved by Carol Oitment, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of January 17, 2017, be approved.

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4. Advancing Equity and Inclusion in the Peel District School Board: A Study of Teaching Assistant Staffing Practices in Special Education

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Ted Byers, recalled that Lindy Zaretsky, of Reaching Education Solutions Inc., was commissioned to undertake a study into current staffing practices for Special Needs Teaching Assistants (TAs). Noting that the document includes an executive summary, an action plan, and a report on the study, he advised that the focus of the research was based on three key quality standards of sufficiency, efficiency, and effectiveness, and that fifty elementary schools and ten secondary schools had participated in the research. Superintendent Byers listed the five themes of the study as: system communication; allocation categories and criteria; pedagogy and curriculum and instruction for Kindergarten-Grade 12; Full Day Kindergarten (FDK); and collaborative learning teams and respectful workplaces. He drew attention to key findings in the report, emerging from the five themes, and the proposed recommendations.

Sharing a brief history of the timeline for the study, Superintendent Byers advised that following a review of the report by the Director's Office, superintendents of education, and a team of special education staff last Fall, an action plan has been developed. Reviewing a chart which outlined tasks to be carried out in three phases, he listed the tasks in the first phase, which included: developing practices and protocol aligned with the Board's guiding principles for equitable and inclusive education; curriculum and resources for students; job embedded classroom supports; use of current bank of augmentative applications such as laptops and technology; professional development for TAs and collaborative learning teams; training for principals and vice-principals on efficient scheduling. He stated that phase two of the plan is focused on program and establishing writing teams to develop instructional designs linked to students interests, coaching in FDK setting, school audits, and adjusting criteria to move from diagnosis to indicators of special needs. Ted Byers added that phase three of the action plan will involve reviewing the role of Behaviour Teaching Assistants (BTAs), re-examine structures and processes, deployment of staff, and possible barriers to providing support. He indicated his intention to form a Steering Committee to prepare a report highlighting the work planned. This Committee will be representative of the different groups impacted by the study.

4. Advancing Equity and Inclusion in the Peel District School Board: A Study of Teaching Assistant Staffing Practices in Special Education (Continued)

In response to a member who indicated the need for more time to review the study in detail and consult with her association, Ted Byers invited Committee members to communicate with their respective associations and provide feedback. He offered to bring back this report to the next two SEAC meetings to gather input from associations. Ted Byers highlighted a statement in the report which indicates that, addressing the challenges of effectiveness and efficiency may impact the perception that there are not enough TAs for special needs in the board. Further comments and questions of clarification responded to included: a three-year timeframe for the work planned in phases; inconsistent use of technologies; increasing collaboration between teachers and TAs; shifting away from individual student case load towards whole school assignments will require professional development and cross training. Members speaking expressed appreciation for the report.

SE-18, moved by Ann Smith, that the report re Advancing Equity and Inclusion in the Peel District School Board: A Study of Teaching Assistant Staffing Practices in Special Education, be received.

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5. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Byers thanked Maureen Mackay, Coordinator for Student Well Being, and staff, for establishing a Mental Health Advisory Committee, which has representation from various employee groups and members of the Mental Health Steering Committee. He advised that partner agencies will be invited to join this Committee and expressed interest in inclusion of one or two SEAC members. Ted Byers stated that the Committee has mapped out system priorities and five priority teams have been created; however, a forum to include student and parent voices will need to be developed, and work will begin in spring. An email will be sent inviting SEAC members to participate in this Committee.

Recalling a report that was brought to the Regular Meeting of the Board on January 24, 2017, regarding Parkholme School and supporting students with Developmental Disabilities (DD) at the secondary level, Ted Byers provided background information on the plan to increase satellite classes for the DD program in mainstream schools in Brampton and decoupling of staff. He proposed that the report be brought back to SEAC in March 2017 for discussions on the Parkholme School plan. A member expressed appreciation for the DD-R program and suggested that the information and resources be made available to all parents.

Ted Byers provided an update report on the suicide prevention and intervention program and commended the significant work done by Maureen Mackay and staff towards professional development, awareness, and support of mental health issues.

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

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6. Special Education Plan Development – Section C: Service Delivery Models by Exceptionality – Intellectual: Mild Intellectual Disability

Using PowerPoint slides, Special Programs Coordinator, Nora Green, and Special Education Coordinators, Tracy Bardell, and Sharon Cook, reviewed the report and presented information on service delivery for students identified with Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) at elementary and secondary levels. It was noted that the Ministry has determined a maximum of 10 students per class for primary and junior classes and 14 students for intermediate level. Sharon Cook stated that options for secondary students who have MID include, accommodation in the home school, general learning strategies, or vocational programming. The administration responded to members' questions of clarification regarding: whether the regular class provides more academic instruction as opposed to a General Learning Disability (GLD) class where life skills are taught; whether the curriculum is taught in LD classes; observation sessions are held as a team to facilitate full discussion on the student; writing skills support and use of writing tools and technology; assessment strategies match instructional strategies.

SE-20, moved by Mary Wright, that the report re Special Education Plan Development - Section C: Service Delivery Models by Exceptionality – Intellectual: Mild Intellectual Disability, be received.

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7. Special Education Plan - Update

Superintendent Byers recollected that work on the Special Education Plan began last year and a web page was developed, for which a link was provided. Using a PowerPoint presentation, Nora Green and Tracy Bardell navigated through the updated web page and demonstrated the format for displaying the content. They explained how the information has been organized based on feedback received from SEAC members and they advised that interactive diagrams and links to specific exceptionalities will be added as the work progresses. Members were invited to email staff with questions and feedback. Suggestions included, adding a button to return to the top of the page and an addendum listing the locations with special education classes. Members speaking showed appreciation for the work done.

SE-21, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that the update report re Special Education Plan, be received.

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8. Letter from Barbara McCool, SEAC Chair, Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board to Honourable Mitzie Hunter re Special Education Funding Formula

SE-22, moved by Carol Oitment, that the Letter from Barbara McCool, SEAC Chair, Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board to Honourable Mitzie Hunter re Special Education Funding Formula, be received.

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9. Question Period

Carol Ogilvie asked about an update report on accessibility standards. Trustee Lawton will follow up with Cindy Francis, Manager of Abilities, Wellness and Attendance.

Jennifer Knight inquired about alternate curriculum and whether the information will be shared with SEAC members. Superintendent Byers will follow up and bring back information.

Dorothy Peddie advised that she will be attending the International Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder Conference at the University of British Columbia, on February 28, 2017. She will bring back resources.

Carol Ogilvie advised that the 16th Annual Parent Conference will be held on Saturday, April 1, 2017 at Mississauga Secondary School and she inquired whether SEAC will have a display table. It was noted that Barbara Cyr usually coordinates collection of resources for the display table.

Chair Foster advised that a fundraising skating event was organized at a local arena on the past weekend, to raise funds for Voice for Hearing Impaired Children. She thanked Trustee Green for chairing the last SEAC meeting and encouraged SEAC members to approach Peel's special education staff to ask questions.

10. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

11. Adjournment

SE-23, moved by Mary Wright, that the meeting adjourn (20:40 hours).

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..... Chair Secretary