

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 Monday, February 23, 2015 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, Vice-Chair
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter
Nokha Dakroub, Trustee
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Brad MacDonald, Trustee
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living

Absent: (apologies received marked *)

Carrie Andrews, Trustee *
Nancy Bratkovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch *
Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada, Chair *
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter
Mary Wright, Peel Caring Network for Challenged Kids *

Also present:

Tammy Bowman, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel
Stan Cameron, Trustee
Sue Lawton, Trustee
Janet McDougald, Board Chair

Administration:

Louise Sirisko, Superintendent, Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)
Joy Uniack, Superintendent of Education (Executive Backup Member)
Scott Moreash, Associate Director, Instructional Support Services
Brian Woodland, Director, Communications and Community Relations Support Services

Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

In the absence of the Chair Byers, Vice-Chair Shelley Foster, assumed the Chair.

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Louise Sirisko, reported that Katie Levalds, Special Education Coordinator for the secondary panel, will be moving to Alternate Programs as Coordinator of the Fresh Start Program, from September 2015. Superintendent Sirisko thanked Katie Levalds for her support and expertise, and congratulated her on her appointment.

SE-12, 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 20, 2015

SE-13, moved by Ann Smith, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of January 20, 2015, be approved.

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4. Scheduling Board Events in Consideration of Faith Days

Director of Communications and Community Relations Support Services, Brian Woodland, provided contextual information with regard to scheduling important Board events, including meetings, in consideration of major faith days. He stated that the Board's Equity and Inclusive Education Policy #54, and the Operating Procedure, outline the expectation that schools do not schedule important public events on major faith days which could exclude some staff, students or parents from participation. He noted that some staff, students or parents should not be required to make a choice, as they have had to in previous years, between attending an important Board event and celebrating a significant faith day. Brian Woodland remarked that this approach acknowledges the importance of spirituality in people's lives.

Advising that the Holy Days and Holidays Calendar is developed each year in consultation with faith leaders, Brian Woodland indicated that significant faith days are highlighted in bold in the calendar. He reported that, approximately three years ago, there were discussions about the impact of scheduling meetings on significant faith days, when staff were required to be present. There was agreement that all Board events, including meetings, should be scheduled in consideration of major faith days. He acknowledged that there may be some unavoidable circumstances that would result in an event being scheduled on an important faith day, for example, changes in the lunar calendar. However, every attempt is made to align events in accordance with the Equity and Inclusive Education Policy and Operating Procedure, and the Holy Days and Holidays Calendar, and to communicate changes as early as possible.

4. Scheduling Board Events in Consideration of Faith Days (Continued)

A member commented that a religious accommodation can be given to someone who would like to attend a special event, but SEAC meetings are not special events and that community members of SEAC volunteer their time to attend meetings. She offered the opinion that the change in schedule now excludes some SEAC members from attending and that, every time a change is made, members have to make accommodations with regard to their families, which causes undue hardship. Brian Woodland explained that there are many in the community whose faith celebrations are not recognized by public holidays. He advised that real inclusion is not about practicality but about doing what is right, and equity is at the core of inclusion of staff, students and parents. Brian Woodland stated that volunteers are valued in Peel, and that every attempt is made to communicate changes to schedules as early as possible. He indicated that a change to the meeting schedule to accommodate a major faith day does not meet the test of undue hardship. Referring to emails that were exchanged between SEAC members and administration, another member stated that the rationale for the changed meeting date should have been explained. Superintendent Sirisko noted that the 2015 SEAC schedule was published one year ago, and Brian Woodland reported that the annual Holy Days and Holidays Calendar is available at the start of the school year. The member asked that the calendar be shared with SEAC members.

SE-14, moved by Wes McDonald, that the oral report re Scheduling Board Events in Consideration of Faith Days, be received.

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5. Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List

Contact information for Wes McDonald will be updated.

SE-15, moved by Wes McDonald, that the Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List, be received.

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6. Ontario Special Needs Strategy – Integrated Services and Communication Plan

Reviewing the report in detail, Coordinating Principal, Ana Pauchulo, provided information regarding the integrated delivery of rehabilitation services under Ontario’s Special Needs Strategy for Children and Youth. She noted that the priorities of the initiative are to identify a recommended approach, build upon local partnerships and relationships, and share perceived barriers for government consideration. The Ministries of Health and Long Term Care, Children and Youth Services, Community and Social Services, and Education are involved.

(Continued overleaf)

6. Ontario Special Needs Strategy – Integrated Services and Communication Plan
(Continued)

Ana Pauchulo explained that the strategy envisions the provision of a new standard development screen for preschool children, coordinated service planning, and integrated delivery of rehabilitation services. She drew members' attention to the chart outlining the process to provide special needs services under the strategy, and she noted that the core service elements are to offer a single, seamless, and easily accessible program of care, with a high quality of service, delivered in a school setting to optimize outcomes. Ana Pauchulo described that the pathways of service, which will be a streamlined continuum of referral, intake, assessment, service planning, treatment, reassessment/ongoing evaluation, discharge/transition. The intervention types were outlined, and she noted that early intervention is prioritized and supported through the provision of parent training, education and coaching. She explained that services are provided to children, youth and families at a convenient location and, wherever possible, school-age children can access rehabilitation services in a school setting. Louise Sirisko spoke about research undertaken by Deloitte which revealed that parents preferred services to be provided at the school.

Information about the waitlists for services, proposal elements and service delivery areas was highlighted by Ana Pauchulo. She reported on the current delivery model in Peel under which occupational therapy and physiotherapy services are provided through the Community Care Access Centres (CCAC). Details about the Partnering for Change program, which is a partnership between the Board, McMaster University, and Central West CCAC, were provided. Under the program, occupational therapists work in classrooms once or twice a week and offer individualized and general strategy recommendations to teachers.

Ana Pauchulo noted that the communication plan for the Ontario Special Needs Strategy includes presentations at SEAC and school council meetings, camera-ready articles, and parent survey. She indicated that SEAC members will discuss and provide feedback on the communication plan during the consultation session following this meeting. Members' questions of clarification included: continuity of services after the student leaves the Board; CCAC waitlist time usually one to two years; parents or the school can refer a student for services.

SE-16, moved by Ann Smith, that the report re Special Needs Strategy – Integrated Services and Communication Plan, be received.

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**7. Letter from Minister Liz Sandals to SEAC Chair re Start of a New Term/
Letter to Minister Liz Sandals from SEAC Chair, Upper Grand DSB re Clarification of
the Special Education Report and the Special Education Plan/
Letter to Minister Liz Sandals from SEAC Chair, Upper Grand DSB re Mandatory
Special Education for OCT Graduates**

SE-17, moved by Carol Oitment:

1. That, the Letter from Minister Liz Sandals to SEAC Chair re Start of a New Term, be received;
2. That, the Letter to Minister Liz Sandals from SEAC Chair, Upper Grand DSB re Clarification of the Special Education Report and the Special Education Plan, be received;
3. That, the Letter to Minister Liz Sandals from SEAC Chair, Upper Grand DSB re Mandatory Special Education for OCT Graduates, be received.

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**8. Letter to SEAC Chairs and Committee Members re May Conference/
Letter to School Boards re ABA Professional Learning Day**

Superintendent Sirisko referred to the Ministry memorandum regarding the May conference. She reported that this is a new Ministry initiative which expands the professional development opportunities for SEAC members. One new and one experienced SEAC member are invited to attend the conference, along with one trustee. Members interested were asked to send Louise Sirisko an email, and she will respond to confirm their attendance.

With regard to the ABA Professional Learning Day, Superintendent Sirisko noted that a staff representative will attend and bring back information that will help to support students with Autism.

SE-18, moved by Carol Ogilvie:

1. That, the Letter to SEAC Chairs and Committee Members re May Conference, be received;
2. That, the Letter to School Boards re ABA Professional Learning Day, be received.

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9. Question Period

Carol Ogilvie asked for an update report regarding the implementation of PPM8. Superintendent Sirisko indicated that staff have reviewed the memorandum, and confirm that Peel process is aligned with Ministry requirements. She indicated that Lorie Grant, Chief, Speech-Language, and staff are evaluating the early screeners. An update report will be brought to the April meeting, and will include a gap analysis for early screeners and interventions to be provided.

9. Question Period (Continued)

Carol Ogilvie asked for an update report on the adult education review. Superintendent Sirisko confirmed that a report will be brought to a future meeting.

Carol Ogilvie reported that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services has launched “I Have Something to Say”, an initiative aimed at engaging children and youth with special needs in a discussion about their lives and their future. Parents, caregivers, siblings, professionals and service providers are also invited to share their stories. Carol Ogilvie indicated that further information is available on the Ministry website.

10. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

11. Adjournment

SE-19, moved by Nokha Dakroub, that the meeting adjourn (20:00 hours).

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