

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, January 21, 2014 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada, Chair
Stan Cameron, Trustee, Vice-Chair
Nancy Bratkovic, Canadian Mental Health Association
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children
Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for Blind and Visually Impaired Children
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada – Peel Chapter
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Lorraine Yuill, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region

Absent: (apologies received marked*)

Meredith Johnson, Trustee
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario Peel Chapter*
Brad MacDonald, Trustee*
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario*
Mary Wright, Peel Caring Network for Challenged Kids

Also present:

Linda Standish, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel

Administration:

Louise Sirisko, Superintendent, Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)
Joy Uniac, Superintendent of Education (Executive Backup Member)

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

Chair Byers welcomed staff and special education students of York University.

SE-10, 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. Special Presentation re My Blueprint

Adrian Graham, Student Success Learning to 18 Leader, who has been working on incorporating and implementing myBlueprint in schools, advised that, this year myBlueprint was used because the Ministry of Education document, Creating Pathways to Success - 2013, was officially released, which mandated using the Individual Pathways Plan (IPP), through a web-based tool. He invited Instructional Coordinator for Career and Guidance Education, Karen Robertson, and Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Transition Facilitator, Ryan Machete, to present on the future of using myBlueprint in schools.

Using PowerPoint slides, Karen Robertson outlined the goals of the presentation which are, to demonstrate and explore myBlueprint and how it can support students with Individual Education Plan (IEP), as well as to introduce the concept for the Community Living Pathway. She described ways for creating pathways to success which included: asking key questions to inspire students to find their path; thinking about goals and opportunities; encouraging students to set goals to improve their work; reviewing success and choices for smooth transition; tracking growth and planning by developing an IPP using myBlueprint. Karen Robertson highlighted the reasons for using myBlueprint as: allows archiving of information such as history of credits and course selection, has an interface with Student Information System (SIS); supports completion of IPP and transition planning; is accessible to all Peel students and families.

Ryan Machete reviewed the myBlueprint web tool, and with the help of a video he demonstrated navigation of the site. He spoke about the concept of supporting all students in Peel including students with exceptionalities, and he highlighted key features such as transition planning, IQ forms, community pathway, student profile plus, community resource finder, skills inventories, financial planner, ability to modify student profile, and adding community partner information. Ryan Machete and Karen Robertson reviewed the action plan for continued refining of ideas, meeting with myBlueprint staff, focus group meetings, and professional development sessions for teachers.

The presenters responded to questions of clarification with regard to a timeline for getting the program ready for use, possibility of having the student's profile or summary of profile included in the IEP, confidentiality of student information. Karen Robertson will e-mail the presentation to members to share with their associations.

SE-11, moved by Shelley Foster, that the special presentation re myBlueprint, be received.

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4. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, December 17, 2013

SE-12, moved by Ann Smith, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of December 17, 2013, be approved.

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5. Special Equipment Amount Funding

Special Education Coordinator, Katie Levalds stated that special equipment funding is provided on an annual basis to assist with costs of equipment, essential to support students with special needs to access the Ontario curriculum. She advised that the Special Education Amount (SEA) consists of two components, the Special Education Per Pupil Amount for purchases of computers, software, computer-related devices, supporting furniture, and the Special Education Claims-Based amount for non-computer related assistive devices such as hearing aids, furniture, etc. Using a PowerPoint presentation, Katie Levalds reviewed the increase in SEA funding amounts over the last five years, noting that the combined per pupil and claims-based funding amount in 2009-2010 was \$ 998,528 and that the per pupil funding component only has grown to \$ 3.6 million for 2013-2014. She provided information on the increased work load, current staffing which includes the Central Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) and two technicians, and proposed additional staffing. Katie Levalds introduced Tracy Bardell, Central SERT and expressed appreciation for her efforts, to refine the process for Assistive Technology over the last few years.

Using a slide presentation, Tracy Bardell advised that all equipment purchased with SEA funds requires the recommendation of qualified professionals such as speech-language pathologists and occupational therapists, a complete claim trial process showing that the student is benefitting from using the equipment, as well as Individual Education Plan (IEP) documentation. She gave examples of functional assessments which include use of various software to address reading and writing needs, and interactive whiteboard setup in classrooms to provide access to the curriculum. She reviewed the guiding questions used for teachers, SERTS and itinerants, along with expectations on the IEP.

Tracy Bardell circulated a detailed flowchart illustrating the process for SEA submission, noting that the process requires collaboration between the school and special education staff at the Central Board Office. She mentioned the positive experience of working with students from Judith Nyman Secondary School, Vocational Program, who assist in getting the equipment ready for schools. Tracy Bardell then reviewed information regarding individual claims, highlighting that there is a 30% increase in the number of students using assistive technology with EQAO, and cluster claims for contained classrooms for which the focus has been on interactive whiteboards. She advised that SEA equipment is: transferrable if a student moves to another school within Peel DSB or another school board in Ontario; currently to be used in school only; may be repaired or replaced according to warranty; is returned to inventory for reallocation or as trial equipment when no longer required or the student graduates.

5. Special Equipment Amount Funding (Continued)

Resource teachers, Sharon Cook and Lisa Brasil, presented the uses and benefits of assistive technology, and software tools such as Premier, Dragon Naturally Speaking and Word Q. They demonstrated the use of text to speech and speech to text programs noting that assistive technology can be delivered to individuals or groups of students and teachers as well as for a combination of student/teacher/support staff training.

A member inquired about allowing the student to take SEA equipment home. Discussion ensued regarding challenges faced with respect to damage, loss, and tracking of equipment, which may stem from permitting equipment to be taken home. Superintendent Sirisko advised that it is a long-standing policy of Peel DSB, that special education equipment is for use in schools only. She stated that the pros and cons can be reviewed and spoke about the possibility of trying a pilot project. Staff responded to questions of clarification from members with regard to: whether there is a tracking system in place for replacement of old equipment; loading software on equipment purchased by students; software compatibility; online accessibility of software.

SE-13, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that the oral report re Special Equipment Amount Funding, be received.

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6. Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List

SE-14, moved by Lorraine Yuill, that the Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List, be received.

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7. Communications

SE-15, moved by Shelley Foster, that the following communications, be received:

1. Letter to Minister Liz Sandals from SEAC Chair, Toronto Catholic District School Board re Speech and Language Services in Ontario
2. Letter to Minister Liz Sandals from SEAC Chair, London District School Board re Funding of Students with Special Education Needs
3. Canadian Mental Health Association Peel CEO leaves lasting legacy
4. Letter to Minister Liz Sandals to Chair, Peel District School Board re High Needs Amount Funding

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7. Communications (Continued)

A member referred to Item 10.1, Letter from the SEAC Chair of Toronto DSB regarding Speech and Language Services in Ontario, and inquired whether Peel will be endorsing the request made in the letter to the Ministers of Education, Children and Youth Services and Health and Long Term Care. Chief Speech Pathologist, Susan Bassili, noted that the letter discusses the Ministries' agreement for seamless coordination of services for school-aged children. She indicated that the issue continues to be discussed and that there are a number of pilot projects which are in the process of being discussed.

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SE-15

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8. Response of Administration to Former Questions

1. Bias-Free Discipline

Superintendent Sirisko reported on her discussions with Superintendent of Leadership Development and School Support Services, Jerry Powidajko, regarding Bias-Free Discipline. She advised that the Staff Development team has been in conversations with other school board personnel and that there will be outreach for disengaged youth. With regard to effective practices, Louise Sirisko noted that she will continue to communicate with the Staff Development team to review lessons learned.

9. Fix the Formula Discussion regarding SEAC Involvement

Director of Communications and Community Relations, Brian Woodland, recalled that the Fix the Formula Campaign was reviewed by Board Chair, Janet McDougald, at the last SEAC meeting. He stated that the campaign's message to the Ministry, is that the High Needs Amount (HNA) funding is not correctly allocated. He circulated information packages which included: talking points for SEAC on special education funding specifically for HNA; speaking notes for reference; questions and answers; fact sheets. Brian Woodland reviewed the steps taken in the previous campaign, as well as the proposed approach for the current campaign, and he invited input from SEAC members with respect to their needs for promoting this campaign as a group. He reported that school councils and principals have been briefed, meetings have been held with school councils in Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon to encourage them to meet with MPPs, faith leaders have been engaged, and letters have been sent to each municipality asking for support for fair share for Peel's special education HNA funding. Brian Woodland will send the promotional documents electronically to SEAC members.

Vice-Chair Cameron highlighted the per Pupil amounts received by neighbouring school boards as \$ 375 for Dufferin-Peel CDSB and \$ 601 for Halton DSB, compared with \$ 339 received by Peel DSB. He noted that trustees have been asked to raise awareness of this issue and that Chair McDougald has offered to accompany trustees to meetings with MPPs.

9. Fix the Formula Discussion re SEAC Involvement (Continued)

A member asked if there had been discussion on what more could be done for special education students with additional funding. Superintendent Sirisko advised that Peel DSB is overspent by \$ 14 million in special education, which means that this amount has been released from other departments in Peel DSB in order to support special education and the shortfall affects all students in Peel. Vice Chair Cameron explained that Peel DSB is providing the required services to special education students without receiving the full funding from the Ministry by adjusting the budget of other departments, which is unfair to other Peel students.

SE-16, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the Fix the Formula Discussion regarding SEAC Involvement (oral), be received.

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10. Question Period

There were no questions.

11. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

12. Adjournment

SE-17, moved by Lorraine Yuill, that the meeting adjourn (20:50 hours).

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