

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, June 14, 2016 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, Vice-Chair
Nancy Bratkovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter
David Green, Trustee
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Sue Lawton, Trustee
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter (19:10)
Harkirat Singh, Trustee
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Mary Wright, Peel Caring Network for Challenged Kids

Absent: (apologies received marked*)

Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada, Chair*
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired

Administration:

Ted Byers, Superintendent of Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)
Pertia Minott, Superintendent of Education (Executive Backup Member)
Scott Moreash, Associate Director of Instructional Support Services

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

In the absence of the Chair, Vice-Chair Foster chaired the meeting.

SE-45, 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, May 17, 2016

Referring to Item 4, Links to Literacy, a member stated that her question and the response, with regard to how the program was funded, are not included in the Minutes. The administration provided clarifying information on costs and implementation of the Links to Literacy program. A trustee reminded members about meeting protocol and indicated that this agenda item should relate only to requests for amendments or clarification to the minutes, as against providing further explanation on items in previous minutes.

Arising from Item 8 of the Minutes, Public Question Period, a member remarked that as Barbara Byers was taken aback by Hilary Campbell's comments, she could not fully respond. The member stated that, in her opinion, this does not align with the values of the Peel District School Board.

SE-46, moved by Ann Smith, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, held May 17, 2016, be approved.

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4. Ontario's Renewed Mathematics Strategy

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Ted Byers, drew attention to the Ministry of Education's memorandum dated April 8, 2016, included in the report, with regard to increasing mathematics achievement across the province. He recalled his brief overview of Ontario's Renewed Mathematics Strategy provided at the last SEAC meeting and he explained how the funding will be allocated to elementary and secondary panels. Superintendent Byers advised that the Ministry has identified that Tier 1 schools will receive the highest level of support and Tier 2 schools will receive second level of support. Peel DSB has three schools in Tier 1 and 14 schools in Tier 2. He stated that keeping in mind identified and non-identified special education students, the Board will determine how the funds will be allocated to these 17 schools. Ted Byers shared information on upcoming training for both elementary and secondary panels, which will be provided to Special Education Resource Teachers (SERT), special education program teachers, and ISSP teachers.

SE-47, moved by Harkirat Singh, that the report re Ontario' Renewed Mathematics Strategy, be received.

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5. Programs and Services for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Superintendent Byers recalled that at the SEAC meeting in April 2016, he had reported on the Ontario Autism Program created by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), which will provide support to families who have children with autism. He spoke about Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) based on principles of learning, and Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) which is application of ABA principles in an intensive setting.

5. Programs and Services for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
(Continued)

Outlining the program changes which began as of April 1, 2016, Superintendent Byers spoke of the impact of these changes in Peel and noted that the goal is to reduce the waitlist. Providing clarifying information, he described the changes: children under age 5 who currently receive IBI service will continue to receive service until they turn 5 and will then be aged out of the program; children under age 5 currently on the waitlist will likely receive service sooner and service providers are keeping track of waitlists; children over the age of 5 who are currently receiving IBI service will be demitted from IBI in stages over a period of 18 months; children over the age of 5 who are on the waitlist and have not received IBI service to date will be removed from the waitlist and those families will receive one-time funding of \$ 8,000 to acquire immediate service. Superintendent Byers stated that Peel DSB is committed to working with partners to facilitate transitioning of students over the next 18 months. On a member's request, Superintendent Byers agreed to provide a written report.

SE-48, moved by Nancy Leaton, that the oral report re Programs and Services for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), be received.

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6. Superintendent's Report

Stating that he has been in the position of Superintendent of Special Education Support Services since last Fall, Ted Byers commented that the end of the school year is a time for reflection on work done. Reviewing his initial goals for working with SEAC, he referred to his letter of November 9, 2015 to SEAC member associations, acknowledging and valuing the role of SEAC, and he expressed gratitude for their work in supporting parents and children. He reiterated his intention to engage with SEAC members in meaningful discussions, including on the Special Education Plan. Superintendent Byers recalled his invitation for member associations to meet with him individually as well as to present information about their respective associations at SEAC meetings, and he extended that invitation to the next year. He thanked Fragile X Foundation, Easter Seals Ontario, and Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region for the presentations made over this school year. Superintendent Byers spoke of his efforts to strengthen the joint work of Special Education with various departments, including Curriculum and Instruction, Early Years, Alternative Programs, and Leadership Development Support Services, to develop programs such as Links to Literacy, and undertake other initiatives including: reviewing processes, such as the external study on Teaching Assistants to ensure the allocation process is maximized; engaging with Professional Student Services Personnel (PSSP) staff; establishing system focus on achievement of special education students.

Superintendent Byers thanked the Board for the recently approved budget, and trustees' commitment to support special education students and programs. He provided details on increased allocation of special education staff and student success stories. He spoke of the role of Capacity Builders and stated that a report on the revised role will be brought to SEAC in the next school year. With regard to a member's request for details of proposed additional hiring and query as to whether the increase in staffing has any correlation with the Ministry's new initiative for special needs, Ted Byers explained the timeline and process for hiring and he advised that a report can be brought in the Fall.

6. Superintendent's Report (Continued)

Ted Byers announced that Special Education Coordinator, Gillian Kajganich, has been promoted to Vice-Principal of Glenforest Secondary School effective September 1, 2016. He thanked her for her work over the past four years and extended best wishes to her in her new role.

SE-49, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that the Superintendent's Report (oral), be received.

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7. Special Education Plan 2016-2017

Superintendent Byers stated that the 2016-2017 Special Education Plan has been posted on the Peel DSB website. A member commented that the Special Education Plan included in the agenda, has no Table of Contents, there are some editorial and formatting issues, and duplication of information. She added that the document does not appear to follow the York Region DSB's template as suggested earlier. Superintendent Byers explained that the Special Education Plan posted on the website is organized and has a Table of Contents. He added that, as a Ministry requirement, the goal is to post the entire plan on the website and to have the report submitted to the Ministry in digital format by way of a link. Another member stated that criteria for different exceptionalities is unclear and information on CCAT, GRS and risk criteria is missing from the document. Ted Byers confirmed that information in Section C, Service Delivery Model by Exceptionality, is divided by exceptionality. A member noted that apart from some formatting issues the Special Education Plan document is a good source of information. Noting that the document is a work in progress she thanked SEAC members and special education staff for their hard work and input. Discussion ensued on reporting and finalizing of the document for submission to the Ministry by the deadline of end July. Superintendent Byers invited comments and input to finalize the Special Education Plan over the next two weeks.

A member indicated her disagreement with the ways in which SEAC is consulted and advised about staff development, as described in the report. Superintendent Byers provided clarifying information on how issues are tracked and raised by way of monthly updates, feedback is invited on drafts from SEAC members at committee meetings, and input is accepted on SEAC agendas. He expressed willingness to consider ways to strengthen SEAC's involvement. A member recalled the previous SEAC meeting at which Superintendent Byers provided the website link, and encouraged involvement of SEAC members, requesting them to contact special education staff or himself with input and suggestions on the Special Education Plan. Another member recollected that SEAC members were offered an opportunity at the beginning of the year to form a sub-committee and a few members had volunteered, however the sub-committee was not formed. She offered to participate in discussions for input.

SE- 50, moved by Ann Smith, that the report re Special Education Plan 2016-2017, be received.

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8. Special Education Department Goals and Projects 2016-2017

Ted Byers reviewed the report and highlighted the goals as, increased achievement for students receiving special education supports, building capacity of staff to support mental health and well-being of all students, capacity building of staff, and increase in system alignment to Ministry and Board services. He advised that there are 13 projects and he invited comments on the nature of the goals outlined in the report. Vice-Chair Foster suggested that members review the report and bring back comments in the new school year.

SE- 51, moved by Sue Lawton, that the report re Special Education Goals and Projects 2016-2017, be received.

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9. Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE)

Superintendent Byers reported that the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) had invited input on issues related to special education programs. The report contains suggestions provided by Peel DSB on successful practices, challenges/issues, and possible solutions/future directions. Chief Social Worker, Jim Van Buskirk, advised that he represents the school boards' social workers on MACSE, which includes several professional groups including teachers. He encouraged feedback from members on the report.

SE- 52, moved by Ann Smith, that the report re Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE), be received.

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10. Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule 2016-2017

A member inquired about topics at the September and October 2016 meetings. She advised that Alison Morse, Provincial Coordinator for Special Education, is willing to assist with training resources for SEAC members in Fall 2016, and expressed her interest in inviting Alison Morse for training and team building on relationships and processes. Superintendent Byers noted the suggestion.

SE- 53, moved by Jennifer Knight, that the report re Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule 2016-2017, be received.

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11. Letter to The Honourable Tracy MacCharles from SEAC Chair, District School Board of Niagara

SE- 54, moved by David Green, that the Letter to The Honourable Tracy MacCharles from SEAC Chair, District School Board of Niagara, be received.

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12. Reports from Representatives and Councils

Barbara Cyr, SEAC's representative on the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), reported on an event held on May 19, 2016, at which Carol Ogilvie and a few trustees were also present. She advised that 125 school council members attended and she expressed hope that more SEAC members will be involved in the event next year.

13. Question Period

Carol Ogilvie circulated information and brochures on Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region's programs and services, summer camps, Kidz Konnect and Youth Konnect, and 2016 Adult Support Groups.

Trustee Lawton provided information on a baseball tournament, Caledon Challenger Baseball Day, a free event that everyone can attend. Challenger Baseball is a program that provides an opportunity for children with cognitive or physical disabilities to enjoy the full benefits of participation in baseball at a level structured to their abilities. The information flyer will be circulated to SEAC members.

Vice-Chair Foster thanked the SEAC members for their voluntary participation in SEAC meetings. She acknowledged the work done by Gillian Kajganich and wished her well in her new position. She expressed appreciation for the wisdom, knowledge and input of staff and trustees and for keeping SEAC updated on Board matters.

14. Adjournment

SE-55, moved by Mary Wright, that the meeting adjourn (20:20 hours).

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