

June 18, 2013
Special Education Advisory Committee:ma

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 18, 2013 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada, Chair
Stan Cameron, Trustee, Vice-Chair
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter
Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children
Meredith Johnson, Trustee
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario Peel Chapter
Brad MacDonald, Trustee
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for Blind and Visually Impaired Children (19:10)
Sandy Milakovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Dorothie Peddie, FASworld Canada – Peel Chapter
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Mary Wright, Peel Caring Network for Challenged Kids
Lorraine Yuill, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region

Also present:

Nancy Bratkovic, Canadian Mental Health Association (Alternate)
Marg Fishbein, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region (Alternate)
Linda Standish, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel

Administration:

Louise Sirisko, Superintendent, Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)
Patricia Noble, Superintendent of Education

Marina Amin, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

SE-57, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the agenda be approved.

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2. Special Presentation re Art from Applewood School

Coordinating Principal, Ana Pauchulo, highlighted the pieces of art on display by Applewood School students in the satellite class at John Fraser Secondary School, and she spoke about the merits and positive aspects of the program for attending students. Superintendent Sirisko commented that these pieces of art reflect the work and effort of staff, and the programs in place, to help students develop and reach their potential.

SE-58, moved by Carol Oitment, that the Special Presentation re Art from Applewood School, be received.

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3. Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

4. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, May 21, 2013

Carol Oitment and Sandy Milakovic advised that apologies for not being able to attend the last meeting were conveyed, but not reflected in the minutes.

Arising from the minutes at Item 10, Special Education Programs and Services Report 2013 – 2014 – Draft, it was clarified that funding for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) is obtained through Developmental Services Ontario (DSO). The minutes will be amended accordingly.

Responding to a member's query about finalization of the draft protocol regarding transition planning, Ana Pauchulo reported on a meeting held the second week of June, when proposed changes and additions to the draft protocol were discussed and reviewed. A final draft will be presented to the senior team of the Ministry of Community and Social Services for review, and it is hoped that the final protocol will be ready this fall.

A member asked about the practice of recording the time in the minutes when committee members leave the meeting. A response will be provided later.

SE-59, moved by Ann Smith, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, held May 21, 2013, as amended, be approved.

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5. Enhanced Learning Update

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Special Education Coordinator, Donna Zuccato, provided details of the new model introduced in 2012, which incorporates many system supports to help staff and students look at new ways of enhancing learning. She noted that key stakeholders and staff were surveyed in October 2012, and the following May. The feedback was positive and indicated a high level of interest from classroom teachers in the In-School Enhanced Learning Program (ISELP), principals, and In-School Support Program teachers. Questions included in the survey centered around: understanding of the new gifted identification and placement model; knowledge relating to the 2012 ISELP; use of resources on the SharePoint site by ISSP teachers; expertise in developing enhanced learning or gifted plans for a student's IEP. Donna Zuccato noted that, while the feedback is encouraging, there is room for improvement and steps are being taken to address those areas. With respect to Professional Development opportunities, professional learning, monitoring and guidance to teachers will continue through ISSP institutes, website resources, enhanced learning support, and teacher release days to attend PD activities.

Providing an outline of future plans, Donna Zuccato highlighted the ongoing collection of data on student profiles, and indicated that a report will be brought back to SEAC next year. She drew attention to the primary and junior Enhanced Learning Classes (ELCs) introduced at Thorn Lodge Public School in Grades 2, 3, and 4, an intermediate ELC at Fallingbrook Middle School, and an additional intermediate level class at Dolphin Senior Public School.

Expressing an interest in reviewing the Fall survey results, a member asked about surveying students and parents to determine their level of satisfaction with the new model. Responding to a query, Louise Sirisko explained that the survey may be altered depending on previous results and what staff need to know with regard to the new model. She complimented staff on the good job done despite the labour disruption experienced over the school year.

SE-60, moved by Nancy Leaton, that the oral update report re Enhanced Learning, be received.

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6. Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List

Members reviewed the list. Mary Wright provided her revised telephone and email details. The list will be updated accordingly.

SE-61, moved by Dorothe Peddie, that the Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List, be received.

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7. Special Education Advisory Committee Draft Annual Calendar

Referring to changes made last year to the annual calendar to reflect topics that members wish to review and discuss during the year, Superintendent Sirisko requested committee members to look at the draft calendar, and discuss suggestions and ideas for the coming year. Following discussion, members provided feedback which included: hiring qualifications for principals; building next phase documents; presentation for new members about Down Syndrome Association; reviewing new Ministry documents a month after their release; review the work of mental health nurses in the Open Minds Healthy Minds initiative; special needs and diversity needs within the school context, with respect to different cultures; receiving discussion items prior to the meeting so a meaningful contribution can be made; budget presentation on grants in October; time based presentations. A member indicated her interest in making a presentation to SEAC about transitions and creating new initiatives for children in Grades 11 and 12.

SE-62, moved by Dorothie Peddie, that the Special Education Advisory Committee Draft Annual Calendar, be received.

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8. Special Education Programs and Services Report 2013 – 2014 - Draft

The above-noted draft report was presented at the May 21, 2013 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee. However, the report was brought back to the Committee with some changes which Ana Pauchulo reviewed. Louise Sirisko indicated that every board across the province is required to outline its programs and services to the Ministry and post them on the website. She provided website details for online review of the draft report.

Responding to a member's query regarding Applied Suicide Intervention Training, Jim Van Buskirk, Chief Social Worker, explained that Peel has four trainers and offers training twice a year. He reported that training is being provided to sixteen additional trainers, and future plans include offering training on a monthly basis.

Circulating copies of the response from Brampton Caledon Community Living to the above noted report, Ann Smith read from speaking notes the concerns expressed by Brampton Caledon Community Living about the Board's direction with respect to students with developmental disabilities, including the addition of contained classes and segregation at the elementary and secondary level. She noted that, for reasons expressed in the response, she will abstain from voting on the motion to receive the draft Special Education Program and Services Report 2013 – 2014.

SE-63, moved by Sandy Milakovic, that the Special Education Programs and Services Report 2013 – 2014 – Draft, be received.

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9. Special Education Funding Plan: Progress to Date, Year Two

Reporting on the second year's progress since the Special Education Funding Plan report was published in March 2011, Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Louise Sirisko, provided a detailed review of the three main indicators, namely, Adequate Funding for Special Education, Review of Programs and Practices, and Collection and Use of Accurate Data.

In the area of Adequate Funding for Special Education, Superintendent Sirisko noted that Peel continues to remain underfunded in the High Needs Amount, and she indicated that underfunding also applies to the Special Equipment Amount, which is used to provide computers and software training to students. Superintendent Sirisko advised members of an estimated increase in expenditures over next year to \$14.2 million outside the special education envelope with the provision of additional contained classes to ensure geographical equity to students. Additionally, extra staff will be required to support the needs of students in home instruction. Noting some positives in government funding to students with special needs in full-day kindergarten, Superintendent Sirisko noted, however, that the per pupil amount funding to Peel continues to be the lowest in the province.

Regarding the Review of Programs and Practices, Superintendent Sirisko indicated that staff have been working to increase the achievement levels of students with special needs, as EQAO data reveals a disparity between provincial averages and students in Peel. She also highlighted that the data shows fewer students on IEPs than the provincial average. Superintendent Sirisko further explained that, in Peel, a number of students receiving special education supports and services do not have an IEP, and that a probable reason for this could be the diversity of the region. She explained that staff are careful when developing an IEP for a student, understanding that many students require the benefit of time, immersion and instruction in English as a second language. The Special Education and Curriculum departments are working collaboratively to provide clear professional development guidelines to support such needs. Acknowledging EQAO as an important measure of student achievement, Superintendent Sirisko noted that other assessments also provide an understanding of the progress made by special needs students, and that stakeholders are being consulted regarding appropriate and authentic assessments for students with other exceptionalities. She highlighted the success of collaborative inquiry in contained classes, and outlined the support provided to staff with the implementation of changes to the Elementary Gifted Identification and Placement model. Superintendent Sirisko also noted the significant increase in the use of assistive technology.

Superintendent Sirisko spoke about the collaborative work being done to support the wellbeing of students. She highlighted the Steering Committee comprised of mental health leaders within the Special Education department, and the establishment of a Working Table to guide implementation of the mental health strategies. Outlining the initial five goals, Superintendent Sirisko reported that Mental Health Awareness training has been provided to all school teams, and a school success planning website will be launched to support student wellbeing. Attention is being focused on supporting students with behavior needs, and a review conducted resulted in blending the Intermediate Itinerant contact team and the Mobile Behaviour team for improved support.

9. Special Education Funding Plan: Progress to Date, Year Two (Continued)

In the area of Collection and Use of Accurate Data, Superintendent Sirisko reported that continued progress is being made on monitoring and tracking of students receiving support, and the deployment of Teaching Assistants (TA). She provided details of how students on the non-identified list are tracked by the Student Information System to ensure accuracy when reporting on students accessing special education supports. She noted the positive impact of enabling timely and appropriate allocation of teaching assistants with the module having gone live. Superintendent Sirisko reported that the Ministry OnSIS report shows that, while the number of exceptional students has decreased, the numbers for certain exceptionalities, specifically autism, have increased significantly. As a result of this trend, she indicated the potential need for additional staffing support.

Reviewing future plans for special education, Superintendent Sirisko outlined developing and implementing: a special needs student assessment plan aligned to the learning profile; professional development plan for key personnel supporting special needs students; SEA, SIP and T3RC SIS modules; system-wide assistive technology plan; implementing PPM 156 (Transition Planning) for September 2014.

Superintendent Sirisko responded to questions of clarification, including: all students who have a TA will have an IEP, but may not be identified; level of support to students is monitored, and principals are encouraged to introduce cluster classes, wherever possible, to maximize TA support. In terms of inclusivity and integration, Superintendent Sirisko noted that mainstream students will be present in the clustered classes.

Responding to a member's query regarding busing of secondary students attending summer school, Katie Levalds explained that the students are not bused because the program is optional. A written response will be provided.

Superintendent Sirisko then spoke about the funding challenges faced by the Board, and in particular with respect to special education. Referring to the continued decline in enrolment and the low High Needs Amount, she asked about SEAC's interest in joining Peel in a letter writing campaign to the Minister of Education to review funding to Peel, which is the lowest funded board in the province. Members speaking indicated their interest and support. Superintendent Sirisko will provide clarification around the Per Pupil Amount.

SE-64, moved by Shelley Foster, that the report re Special Education Funding Plan: Progress to Date, Year Two, be received.

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10. Communications

SE-65, moved by Lorraine Yuill, that the following communications, be received:

1. Letter to Minister Liz Sandals from SEAC Chair, Brant Haldimand, Norfolk Catholic District School Board regarding Special Education Preparatory Courses for Teachers
2. Letter to Minister John Milloy from SEAC Chair, Peterborough Victoria Northumberland Clarington Catholic District School Board regarding Discontinuation of Special Services at Home (SSAH) Funding
3. Letter from Peel Caring Network for Challenged Kids (Peel CNCK) regarding nomination of Mary Wright as its representative on the Special Education Advisory Committee

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11. Question Period

Barbara Cyr advised members of parents having to wait six months for an IPRC. She also reported that parents of children with two different exceptionalities were being told to ask for two IPRCs. Superintendent Sirisko requested that the parents call her office with details so that the issues can be addressed with the provision of support to school teams, wherever required. She explained that the department is reviewing the structure of IPRCs and areas of focus.

Ann Smith drew attention to the revised dates of November 27 – 29, 2013 for the Symposium, Meeting the Diversity Challenge, organized by Community Living Ontario.

12. Public Question Period

Teresa Morrison, Peel Elementary Teachers' Local, expressed support for the Board's campaign for an improved funding formula for Peel, whether it be through a letter writing campaign, or meetings with MPPs.

13. Adjournment

Superintendent Sirisko thanked Committee members and staff for their work and support of Peel's students. She congratulated and thanked retiring staff, Marg Fishbein, Cindy Perras, and Cathy White, and Barb MacRae, who will continue her work of helping students with special needs at Rick Hansen Secondary School.

SE-66, moved by Dorothie Peddie, that the meeting adjourn (20:55 hours).

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..... Chair Secretary