

March 19, 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, March 19, 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
Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children
Meredith Johnson, Trustee
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Lorraine Yuill, Learning Disabilities Association of Mississauga
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for Blind and Visually Impaired Children
Sandy Milakovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of North Peel
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living

Absent: (apologies received marked *)

Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario Peel Chapter*
Brad McDonald, Trustee
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario*

Also present:

Marg Fishbein, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel
Daniel Elias, PPVPA
Marilyn Matis, Association for Bright Children (Alternate)
Linda Standish, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel

Administration:

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

Marina Amin, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was reordered to commence with Item 11.1, Presentation: Canadian Mental Health Association, and information brochures on mental health programs were handed out.

SE-28, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the agenda, as amended, be approved.

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(2/3rds' majority)

2. Presentation: Canadian Mental Health Association

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Louise Sirisko, introduced Sandy Milakovic, member of the Special Education Advisory Committee, and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) of Peel Region, and she noted that CMHA staff would be speaking about the work being done by the association to provide supports and connections for youth at risk in Peel.

Sandy Milakovic introduced Shahnawaz Ali, coordinator of Fact Peel Plus, and Julia Umbrio, coordinator of Impact Services for Youth. Using a PowerPoint presentation, Julia Umbrio and Shahnawaz Ali, outlined some of the factors contributing to mental illness and the consequences of unmet needs and lack of support. Statistics of suicide rates due to mental illness were provided, and it was highlighted that suicide is the second leading cause of death for Canadians between the ages of 10 and 24. Listing the various programs offered by CMHA, it was noted that a non-judgemental, safe, open and supportive environment is important for individuals to interact freely with one another. Prevention, early detection, and intervention are key to promoting mental health, and the programs and services offered by CMHA include opportunities for meaningful participation, learning life skills, and increasing social bonding. Julia Umbrio and Shahnawaz Ali described some of the programs and services, including: Youth Net Peel, a “by youth for youth” mental health promotion program available in some of Peel’s schools; Impact, a strengths-based early intervention program for young people aged 12 - 18 years; Fact Peel Plus, an early intervention program to support people between the ages of 16 and 45 who have experienced a first episode of psychosis. They concluded the presentation with positive comments from clients on the mental and social benefits from attending such programs. It was noted that details of the many accessible support programs are provided in the handouts circulated, and further information may be obtained from the CMHA website. Sandy Milakovic announced that the 2nd Annual “Walk for Life, Walk for Hope” Walk-a-Thon in memory of John Hanan, will take place on April 27, 2013, the proceeds of which go to support mental health awareness and suicide prevention.

The presenters responded to questions of clarification re: programs offered by CMHA, and in partnership with other stakeholders; communication protocol to school staff around behavior issues.

SE-29, moved by Ann Smith, that the presentation by Canadian Mental Health Association, be received.

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3. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

4. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, February 19, 2013

SE-30, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, held February 19, 2013, be approved.

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5. Policy/Program Memorandum 156 Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs
Integrated Transition Planning for Young People with Developmental Disabilities
Creating Pathways to Success
Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Kindergarten to Grade 12 and the 34 Credit Threshold

Reporting on Policy/Program Memorandum 156 (PPM 156), Ana Pauchulo, Coordinating Principal of Special Programs, stated that the memorandum provides direction to school boards on the development of student transition plans as part of the Individual Education Plan (IEP). The intent is to effectively integrate services to ensure a consistent approach across schools, and a smooth transition for students with special needs and youth with developmental disabilities, so that continuity of programs and services are maintained. Ana Pauchulo indicated that the memorandum mandates implementation by September 2014, and that staff from the Special Education and Curriculum departments are in the process of collaboratively developing a framework for implementation. She noted that, later in the meeting, input will be sought from the Committee on areas of consideration to assist with development of an implementation plan.

Patricia Rossall, Superintendent of Education, Alternative Programs, reported that a new comprehensive Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Kindergarten to Grade 12 students will be released in Spring 2013 by the Ministry of Education. Creating Pathways to Success will support young students in career planning based on their interests and needs. She indicated that, commencing September 2013, students in Grades 7 – 12 will be provided with a web-based Individual Pathway Plan (IPP), which will be reviewed twice in the school year. Indicating that staff, including administrators, lead teachers, and special education teachers, are being trained on the use of this career planning tool, Superintendent Rossall provided a detailed description of myBlueprint.ca, with respect to: course planning, tracking and monitoring levels of completion, résumé building. She spoke about plans to interface the Student Information System with myBlueprint, so that school courses are current for student planning.

Superintendent Rossall updated the Committee on changes to Ministry funding after the 34 credit threshold. She reported that, in the current environment of deficit and reduction, the Ministry is looking for students to graduate in four years. The policy indicates that, after 34 eligible credits, funding per student will be provided at the continuing education rate. Exemptions to this rule will apply to: students with an Individual Education Plan; English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development learners; students who are enrolled in their first four consecutive years of secondary school and have earned more than 34 credits. Superintendent Rossall clarified that the Board will accommodate students who want to take courses beyond the 34 credit threshold through options like e-learning, part-time courses, summer or night school credits, even while it faces a funding deficit.

Cathy White and Katie Levalds, Special Education Coordinators, spoke about transitioning supports for special needs students. It was stated that the 34 credit threshold provides an opportunity to collaborate with community partners to ensure that special needs children are supported as they transition to greater self reliance.

5. Policy/Program Memorandum 156 Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs
Integrated Transition Planning for Young People with Developmental Disabilities
Creating Pathways to Success
Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Kindergarten to Grade 12 and the 34 Credit Threshold (Continued)

Committee members were invited to comment and provide feedback on the information shared with respect to PPM 156, Integrated Transition Planning and Creating Pathways to Success. Guiding questions were handed out for members to discuss in groups and provide input for development of an implementation plan. Some feedback from members, included: concern regarding 34 credit threshold with respect to students with exceptionalities, who may not have an IEP but need the extra support; concern for special needs students transitioning into the community, in regard to understanding their special requirements and needs; bringing job programs into schools as a co-op feature, such as “Can Do Candles and Crafts” presented at the December 18, 2012 meeting; creating a safe social net for graduating special needs students in the form of a mentorship program/job coaches/potential employers; enhanced engagement of parents in a child’s learning plan.

SE-31, moved by Ann Smith, that the report re:

1. Policy/Program Memorandum 156 Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs, be received;
2. Integrated Transition Planning for Young People with Developmental Disabilities, be received;
3. Creating Pathways to Success, be received;
4. Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Kindergarten to Grade 12 and the 34 Credit Threshold, be received.

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6. Open Minds, Healthy Minds Update

Updating the Committee on the Open Minds, Healthy Minds initiative, Maureen Mackay, Coordinator – Student Well Being, reported that five nurses have been allocated to work in Peel and Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB schools, and she provided details of their visit to Peel on March 18, 2013. She commented on their extensive expertise in the field of mental health and addictions, and experience ranging from working with families in the rural areas of India, to working with students 16 years of age and older with mental health problems, and cases of substance abuse. She noted the nurses’ willingness to learn more about Peel, and she indicated that visits to Peel’s schools will be arranged by the Social Work and Psychology departments. Two Professional Development days are being scheduled towards the end of April to provide learning opportunities for school mental health teams. Maureen Mackay provided details of the School Mental Health ASSIST initiative funded by the Ministry to help district school boards build systems and school capacity to support students with mental health needs.

6. Open Minds, Healthy Minds Update (Continued)

SE-32, moved by Shelley Foster, that the oral update report re Open Minds, Healthy Minds, be received.

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7. Communications

SE-33, moved by Wes McDonald, that the following communications, be received:

1. Letter to Minister Liz Sandals from SEAC Chair, Trillium Lakelands District School Board re Special Education Preparatory Courses
2. Letter to Minister Laurel Broten from SEAC Chair, Upper Grand District School Board re Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
3. Letter to Ministers Liz Sandals and Ted McMeekin from SEAC Chair, Thames Valley District School Board re Concerns about Developmental Services of Ontario Agency

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Referring to Item 7.3 above, Superintendent Sirisko circulated the letters written by Peel DSB Chair, Janet McDougald, to Ministers Liz Sandals and Ted McMeekin, advocating on behalf of Peel's students with special needs, and she invited SEAC to co-sign the letter. Ann Smith stated that she would like have the letter reviewed by the Director of Brampton-Caledon Community Living. Members were supportive of having the letter co-signed by the SEAC Chair, Barbara Byers, on behalf of the Committee.

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SE-33

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8. Question Period

Barbara Cyr inquired about release of the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT) results to parents. Superintendent Sirisko explained that exact student scores are not sent home to parents, as, for many families, the scores are difficult to comprehend. A communication is sent to parents advising that the scores are in, and that the numbers are in keeping with the report card and other assessment data. She noted that, if further dialogue is required, parents are personally called to review and discuss next steps.

9. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

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10. Adjournment

SE-34, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the meeting adjourn (21:00 hours).

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..... Chair Secretary