

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, March 19, 2018 at 19:10 hours.

Members present:

Sue Lawton, Trustee, Vice-Chair
Thomas Corbett, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Kathy McDonald, Trustee
Suzanne Nurse, Trustee
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Mary Wright, Down Syndrome Association of Peel

Members absent: (apologies received*)

Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, Chair
Nancy Bratkovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch*
Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada*
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter*
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter*

Also present:

Karen Del Ben, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel

Administration:

Ted Byers, Superintendent of Special Education Support Services
Poleen Grewal, Associate Director, Instructional and Equity Support Services
Peter Joshua, Director of Education
Shirley-Ann Teal, Acting Superintendent of Education

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

In the absence of Chair, Shelley Foster, the meeting was chaired by Vice-Chair Sue Lawton.

(Continued Overleaf)

1. Approval of Agenda (Continued)

The agenda was reordered slightly. The following items were added to the agenda.

- 10.3 Letter from the Chair of SEAC of Grand Erie District School Board to the Minister of Education Supporting Bill 191 and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Resources
- 10.4 Letter from the Chair of Halton District School Board to the Minister of Education Supporting Bill 191 and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Resources

SE-25, moved by Ann Smith, that the agenda, as amended, be approved.

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(2/3rds' majority)

2. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

3. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, February 20, 2018

Referring to Item 6, Special Education Advisory Committee Priorities, Ann Smith clarified that a member had referred to a Ministry of Education Conference, not PAAC on SEAC, and Jennifer Knight added that she is a member of the SEAC Newsletter Sub-committee.

SE-26, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of February 20, 2018, be approved.

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4. Poverty Indicators

Copies of the report were circulated along with an info-graphic. Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Ted Byers, invited Chief Research Officer, Paul Favaro, and Research Officer, Kim Bennett, to present the report on students living in poverty.

Kim Bennett stated that this report is the second in a series of reports on students and families living in poverty, which uses poverty indicators to obtain complex multi-dimensional data to measure poverty and its impact in Peel DSB, and to track progress made. With the help of PowerPoint slides, she reviewed the poverty indicator measures, which included: median household income; reliance on social assistance; low income measure; students with competencies and abilities in all Early Development Instrument (EDI) domains for success in schools, such as physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive development as they enter school; EQAO scores; high school graduation rates; French Immersion (FI) enrolment; one-parent families; identified special education exceptionalities; and persistent absenteeism. Explaining how an SRI Decile Gradient is calculated, Kim Bennett noted that the SRI deciles show that approximately 27,839 students, or 1 in 5 students in Peel DSB, live in poverty.

4. **Poverty Indicators** (Continued)

Graphs showing differences in the ten deciles for median household income after tax, percentage of income from government payments, and percentage of students living in poverty, were reviewed. Maps depicting poverty areas by postal code in the Region of Peel, demonstrated that areas of poverty are often hidden in areas of affluence, and that students in decile 1 reside in families with lower median household income and have fewer competencies and abilities. Further data indicated that poverty impacted mathematics grades, high school graduation rates, FI enrolment, and absenteeism. The number of students from lower income groups was considerably higher in special education exceptionalities such as behavioural, communication, and mild intellectual disabilities, while gifted students were fewer. Exceptionalities such as autism, learning disabilities, and developmental disabilities were not impacted by poverty.

The administration responded to members' comments and questions of clarification regarding: consistency and equitable access to programming across the board and whether board policy is followed at school level for assessments; misinformation with regard to psycho-educational assessments; low-income families cannot afford private assessments; fewer children in lower income families are identified as gifted; gifted students who opt for French Immersion or other regional programs are not provided support through the gifted program. Lengthy discussion ensued on whether gifted students who choose another pathway should continue with a gifted identification and receive gifted support. Clarification was provided that students who are identified in the elementary panel, but who choose a different pathway from Enhanced Learning Class placement in high school, do not continue with the identification. Responding to a trustee's query about reviewing the situation, Shirley-Ann Teal, Acting Superintendent of Education, explained that identification in any exceptionality through an IPRC review, is done to meet a student's needs, and if a program is not being delivered because of change in pathway, the identification or label is no longer needed. Members related anecdotal accounts of gifted students who may display problematic behaviour if they do not receive the right support, and concern was raised about gifted students who may be identified with a behavioural exceptionality. Vice-Chair Lawton asked that specific questions from parents and associations be brought to Special Education staff for clarification and review. Superintendent Byers commented that questions and concerns are addressed throughout the year. He offered to bring back a response on students who no longer continue with the gifted identification in secondary school.

Associate Director of Instructional and Equity Support Services, Poleen Grewal noted that data on behavioural and gifted students needs to be evaluated with regard to its correlation to other data such as race, gender, country of birth, etc. and an action plan needs to be developed. In response to a query on action plan timelines, Poleen Grewal advised that as some of the issues are larger regional issues, a workgroup has begun work within the board and with the Region of Peel, which will take most of this year. Later in the meeting, a member commented on the possibility of gathering data on identifications and IPRCs of all students in Peel, to review the number of students in gifted or advanced placement programs in schools, in relation to poverty areas. Ted Byers indicated that this suggestion can be addressed in the action plan.

SE-27, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the report re Poverty Indicators, be received.

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5. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Ted Byers, circulated and reviewed the report, which highlighted the Action Plan for Achieving Equity and Inclusion in Peel DSB (TA Study). Stating that the implementation of the action plan was spread over three years, he displayed a chart representing the action items which are expected to be completed in the first year. He provided updated information as to the status of each item, noting that all the action items are at different stages of completion. Ted Byers advised that the action plan will be implemented throughout the Peel DSB system. He will email a copy of the chart to SEAC members.

SE-28, moved by Jennifer Knight, that the Superintendent's Report, be received.

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6. Budget Consultation

Superintendent Byers recalled previous discussions on the Board budget when input was invited on budget priorities or business cases that may be brought forward. He read a list of suggestions made at the February 2018 SEAC meeting to add business cases for another transition facilitator, an itinerant teacher to support gifted program, increasing the number of Professional Student Services Personnel (PSSP), a broad category related to professional learning and its roll out in certain areas for diagnoses and also for students with specific needs, particularly for identifications in areas of small populations and to provide support for all students, and for more Teaching Assistants. Stating that the budget process is complex and challenging, Ted Byers noted that this year, Michelle Anderson, Coordinating Principal for Assistive Technology and 13 Assistive Technology Resource Teachers (ATRT) have been added to the team and, in addition, a business case will be submitted to add one more ATRT. He provided information on existing assistive technology staff and areas they support. Ted Byers asked members to email him if they have further suggestions over the next two days.

SE-29, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that the report re Budget Consultation, be received.

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7. Special Needs Strategy

A handout providing updated information on the Special Needs Strategy (SNS) Implementation was circulated. Superintendent Byers reviewed the document, noting that Ontario's SNS was provincially implemented. He stated that Integrated Delivery of Rehabilitation Services (IR) was paused and will move forward with a phased approach to IR services.

7. Special Needs Strategy (Continued)

Superintendent Byers advised that the Provincial Advisory Group (PAG), which comprises clinical experts, and education stakeholders, has met to discuss challenges, review various tiered service delivery models, and the tools and mechanisms to support continued IR support for children, youth and families. He commented that he and other special education staff were part of the Steering Committee in Peel, working with occupational therapists and physical therapists, and the outcome of upcoming meetings will be brought back in April 2018. Responding to a question on advice being submitted to the Committee, Ted Byers explained that Peel DSB is not among the associations comprising PAG and that direction will be provided to Steering Committees. He explained that the program is being executed centrally, and all 72 Ontario school boards are not part of PAG. In terms of transition of IR services, he noted that between April and August 2018, sector partners will proceed with transfers from Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) to Care and Treatment Centres (CTC), and the CTC for Peel will be ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development. With regard to queries about service to students, Superintendent Byers advised that clarification is awaited and will be brought back to SEAC. He added that through the Partnering for Change (P4C) model, the Central West Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) has placed occupational therapy services in every school. Bob Cambria, Coordinator for Integrated Services, provided information on hiring of service coordinators, and the pilot program to evaluate which families can benefit. Responding to questions of clarification, he indicated that coordinators will provide more intensive service, fill out information for student identification, and waitlists will be monitored to see how many families can be accepted over a period of time.

Superintendent Byers reviewed the information in the handout on Development Surveillance Initiative (DSI), noting that at the end of this year, DSI will be evaluated to gain a better understanding of the use of tools and resources by parents and professionals in various settings. As part of next steps, Ted Byers indicated that the Ministries remain committed to implementing Ontario's SNS and more information is available from the local service provider, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, or the SNS Collaborative website. Responding to further questions of clarification, Ted Byers advised that the program is designed to reduce wait times, create seamless transition from pre-school to school to ensure best use of professionals, and consider how to simplify the process.

SE-30, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the report re Special Needs Strategy, be received.

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8. Letter from the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Peel District School Board to the Minister of Education, regarding the Funding Formula for Special Education

Superintendent Byers reviewed the draft letter with respect to revising the funding formula and minor amendments to the last paragraph were noted.

SE-31, moved by Suzanne Nurse, that Letter from the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Peel District School Board to the Minister of Education regarding the Funding Formula for Special Education, be received.

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9. Letters from the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Peel District School Board to the Minister of Education, and to SEAC Chairs re the Need for Additional Funding for Transportation

Superintendent Byers reviewed the draft letters.

SE-32, moved by Jennifer Knight, that the Letters from the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Peel District School Board to the Minister of Education, and to SEAC Chairs re the Need for Additional Funding for Transportation, be received.

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10. Letters from the Grand Erie District School Board and Halton District School Board to the Minister of Education Supporting Bill 191 and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) Resources

Superintendent Byers circulated and reviewed copies of the letters in support of Bill 191, regarding provision of support for students with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD). He stated that Peel DSB supports students with FASD and will welcome resources.

SE-33, moved by Thomas Corbett, that the Letters from the Grand Erie District School Board and Halton District School Board to the Minister of Education Supporting Bill 191 and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) Resources, be received.

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11. Response of Administration to Former Questions

1. Everyday Mental Health Practices

Superintendent Byers recalled his report on the Everyday Mental Health strategy, and a question at the last SEAC meeting. Maureen Mackay, Coordinator for Student Well-Being, advised that on March 5, 2018, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) had sent a message to members about a pilot project and a link to the School Mental Health-Assist website. She stated that the site was built in partnership with ETFO and School Mental Health-Assist, and that in view of students developing mental health problems in early teen years, educators need social and emotional strategies to deal with these issues. She added that the Canadian Association for Mental Health (CAMH) will review top 15 social and emotional learning programs and core competencies to build related activities. She spoke about core activities such as, stress management, emotional identification, positive relationships, and focusing on teaching children how to pause and reflect. Maureen Mackay demonstrated an online tutorial on how educators can navigate the website to access information. She advised that the site will be accessible for three months, after which teachers will complete a before and after survey, which will be evaluated by School Mental Health-Assist. She explained how to use the Activity Card in the classroom and commented that feedback from parents has been positive.

11. Response of Administration to Former Questions (Continued)

1. Everyday Mental Health Practices (Cont'd)

Ted Byers stated that Peel DSB is participating in this pilot project, and that schools of the Mental Health Lead Principals have been specifically invited to participate. Feedback will be received from participants in the pilot, and adjustments if needed will be done over this summer, with provincial roll out of the program scheduled for fall 2018. Ted Byers will email website information to SEAC members. Vice-Chair Lawton commented on the importance of addressing mental health issues and noted that this year every Peel DSB student trustee candidate has identified student mental health as a priority.

SE-34, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the response of administration to former questions re Everyday Mental Health Practices, be received.

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12. Question Period

Barbara Cyr advised that Ann Smith and Carol Ogilvie have volunteered to be present at the SEAC table for the upcoming Parent Conference. Barbara Cyr may be contacted for more information, and brochures for display on the SEAC table may be sent to her.

Trustee McDonald reported on a flag raising held on March 7, 2018, at the City Hall in Brampton, accompanied by a proclamation by Mayor Linda Jeffrey declaring March 21st as World Down Syndrome Day. She provided information on Down Syndrome and chromosome 21.

13. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

14. Adjournment

SE-35, moved by Jennifer Knight, that the meeting adjourn (21:20 hours).

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