

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 31, 2015 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada, Chair
Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, Vice-Chair
Carrie Andrews, Trustee
Nancy Bratkovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch
Karen Kennedy, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter
Brad MacDonald, Trustee
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter (19:15)
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Mary Wright, Peel Caring Network for Challenged Kids

Absent: (apologies received marked *)

Nokha Dakroub, Trustee*
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired

Also present:

Karen Del-ben, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel

Administration:

Joy Uniack, Superintendent of Education (Executive Backup Member)

Marina Amin, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

The following item was added to the agenda:

1.2 Special Presentation - Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region

SE-20, moved by Brad MacDonald, that the agenda, as amended, be approved.

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2/3rds majority

2. Special Presentation – Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region

Carol Ogilvie introduced Cheri Hearty, a Director at Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region, Marianna Healey, a Co-op student working on outreach, academic, and leading youth group programs at the association.

Marianna Healey reported that the Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region is the local chapter of Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, and the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. Noting that 1 in 10 people are afflicted with a certain type of learning disability, she stated that learning disabilities can affect average to above average individuals in different ways, and are sometimes associated with mental health issues. Using a slide presentation, copies of which were circulated earlier, Marianna Healey provided details about the various supports and services available to families, including: academic support through tutoring and computer strategies; social skills; positive conflict resolution; resource counselling; reference library; workshops. Members participated in an exercise that demonstrated the manner in which individuals with a learning disability perceive and learn differently, and Marianna Healey highlighted the importance of creating awareness about different learning needs, and accommodating them to help students be successful. Marianna Healey encouraged members to visit the association’s website which provides useful information regarding parent support groups, resource counsellor support; various learning apps, etc.

Responding to a trustee’s question, Marianna Healey advised that while Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region is not involved in direct assessments, a resource counsellor can provide information and guidance regarding the process. She indicated that new and improved outreach strategies are explored to facilitate access to information by parents, and community partners. It was noted that the organization has initiated academic support programs in some schools, which has created an awareness of the kinds of supports and resources offered by the Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region.

SE-21, moved by Brad MacDonald, that the Special Presentation regarding Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region, 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 23, 2015

SE-22, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of February 23, 2015, be approved.

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5. Peel District School Board Accessibility Plan Status Report - 2014

Jennifer Miller, Accessibility Coordinator, indicated that the report provides a status update of actions completed and ongoing to achieve obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005. Noting that there is continuous improvement based on staff and student need, Jennifer Miller advised that Peel is in the process of refining and updating the staff training modules, and also developing a volunteer training module. She stated that the Board now has a Use of Service Animals Operating Procedure, and that service animal information brochures and hand-outs have been developed for staff and the school community. Jennifer Miller spoke about the work being done with regard to designing accessible play spaces that cater to a wide variety of special needs. A guide is being developed that addresses various issues to make play spaces more accessible, which will be reviewed by the Special Education department. In the area of building accessibility awareness, Jennifer Miller reported that information sessions and training workshops will be available to staff during the year and that, during the summer, work will commence on developing strategies to incorporate accessibility awareness into the curriculum. She advised that the Accessibility Awareness Committee (AAC) is developing camera ready articles for schools regarding the legislation, and building awareness on making classrooms more accessible to different types of disabilities. She noted special education staff representation on the Peel Equity Round Table and Inclusion Council. Jennifer Miller stated that the Region of York is working with the provincial government to develop an accessibility survey tool that will help organizations assess their standards of accessibility in regard to AODA.

Jennifer Miller responded to members' questions regarding: accessibility requirements relate to construction of new play spaces; use of colour coding when constructing new play spaces is being brought to the attention of the Board's vendors. A member suggested applying colour coding to internal spaces as well. Jennifer Miller responded that the importance of using colour coding for people with disabilities is being recognized more widely, and she noted that the Facilities department has spoken about the need for developing guides for other spaces as well.

SE-23, moved by Shelley Foster, that the Peel District School Board Accessibility Plan Status Report - 2014, be received.

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- 6. **Letter to Minister Liz Sandals from SEAC Chair, Renfrew County DSB, re Regulation 274**
Letter to Minister Liz Sandals from SEAC Chair, Grand Erie DSB, re Ontario Regulation 274/12 Hiring Practices
Letter to Minister Liz Sandals from SEAC Chair, Thames Valley DSB, re Regulation 274
2015 Voice Conference
Dress Loud Day May 1, 2015 – VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children

SE-24, moved by Nancy Leaton, that the following communications be received:

1. Letter to Minister Liz Sandals from SEAC Chair, Renfrew County DSB, re Regulation 274;
2. Letter to Minister Liz Sandals from SEAC Chair, Grand Erie DSB, re Ontario Regulation 274/12 Hiring Practices;
3. Letter to Minister Liz Sandals from SEAC Chair, Thames Valley DSB, re: Regulation 274;
4. Report re 2015 Voice Conference;
5. Report re Dress Loud Day May 1, 2015 – VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children.

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Referring to Items 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3, letters sent to Minister Liz Sandals about Regulation 274/12 – Hiring Practices, a member suggested that the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Peel DSB demonstrate its support by writing a similar letter to the Minister and highlighting how Regulation 274/12 – Hiring Practices is making it difficult to staff schools appropriately and effectively, and with teachers who have special education abilities. Members agreed to Trustee MacDonald drafting a letter and bringing it to a future meeting.

With respect to Item 6.4, 2015 Voice Conference, a member provided details about the conference and encouraged members of SEAC to visit the website for the agenda, and to register for the event. Regarding Item 6.5, Dress Loud Day – VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, the member spoke about bringing awareness of hearing impairment, and noted that the website has many resource tips for fundraising and organizing different activities.

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SE-24

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7. **Canadian Mental Health Association – System Wise**

Nancy Bratkovic reported that the Canadian Mental Health Association had received funding to work collectively with service providers to develop strategies that respond to system challenges with respect to transitioning youth to adult programs, particularly youth with complex mental health issues. She introduced Kim Paumier who represents Canadian Mental Health Association in the role of service coordination.

7. Canadian Mental Health Association – System Wise (Continued)

Kim Paumier provided a detailed description of her role as coordinator serving youth aged 16 – 24 years with mental health issues in the areas of Brampton and extending right up to Caledon. She spoke about the complexities of mental health issues and the challenges faced by parents and clients in determining the appropriate service and support. Kim Paumier explained that, as service coordinator, she is required to recognize these challenges, coordinate with Ministry staff to obtain the necessary support and funding, and direct clients to appropriate programs. She also spoke about her role in transitioning youth into the right adult programs or multiple agencies, as needed. Indicating that there is always scope for system service reform, Kim Paumier spoke appreciatively about the supports available that people need to be made aware of, and she stated that the System Wise network provides assistance in this regard.

SE-25, moved by Brad MacDonald that the oral report re Canadian Mental Health Association – System Wise, be received.

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8. Question Period

There were no questions.

9. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

10. Adjournment

SE-26, moved by Nancy Bratkovic, that the meeting adjourn (20:00 hours).

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