

## 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, May 15, 2018 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, Chair  
Sue Lawton, Trustee, Vice-Chair  
Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada  
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter  
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario  
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter  
Kathy McDonald, Trustee  
Thomas Corbett, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region (20:05)  
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario  
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter  
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living  
Mary Wright, Down Syndrome Association of Peel

Members absent: (apologies received)

Nancy Bratkovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch  
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired  
Suzanne Nurse, Trustee

Also present:

Karen Del Ben, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel

Administration:

Ted Byers, Superintendent of Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)  
Poleen Grewal, Associate Director, Instructional and Equity Support Services

Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

### 1. Approval of Agenda

SE-45, moved by Sue Lawton, that the agenda be approved.

..... carried

### 2. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

**3. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, April 17, 2018**

SE-46, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of April 17, 2018, be approved.

..... carried

**4. Ministry of Education 2017 Governance Engagement**

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Ted Byers, explained that the above-noted report contains the Ministry memo which summarizes feedback invited from a number of educational partners on five governance topics: trustee codes of conduct and integrity commissioners; trustee honoraria; student trustee term of office and election process; electronic meeting participation; director of education qualifications. The memo also describes next steps that will be taken on each of the governance topics. In response to a question from Chair Foster, Superintendent Byers noted that Policy 66 outlines the protocols related to student trustees, including appointment, and roles and expectations. Remarking that the student trustees are a great resource to the Board of Trustees, Vice-Chair Lawton indicated that they attend meetings of the Board, and are effective representatives of Peel students. Ted Byers highlighted the interest shown by Student Trustee Kushpal Pawar in developmental disabilities and mental health issues, and stated that the student trustee is a strong supporter of the Mental Health Leader initiative being piloted in schools.

SE-47, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the report re Ministry of Education 2017 Governance Engagement, be received.

..... carried

**5. Superintendent's Report**

The report was circulated. Reviewing the report, Superintendent Byers thanked Committee members who attended the Psychology Conference held on May 1, 2018, and for their support of the initiative. He advised that Season Two of the series, 13 Reasons Why, will begin airing on Netflix on May 18, 2018. He briefly outlined Season One, and stated that Season Two will explore a number of storylines which may be emotionally triggering for vulnerable students. Information and resources are being provided to all schools and families to support student mental health and wellbeing.

SE-48, moved by Mary Wright, that the Superintendent's Report, be received.

..... carried

## 6. Student Census

Providing background information, Senior Communications Officer, Kayla Tishcoff, reported that the Board had approved a motion to undertake a student census and a Steering Committee has been working on developing the questions, implementation procedures, and guidelines for data collection. Reviewing a PowerPoint presentation, she explained that a student census will help to better understand the student population, identify and eliminate barriers, and seek to establish effective programs or reallocate resources to serve student needs. She advised that the Ministry is expected to mandate that student census be undertaken by all school boards. Research and Accountability Officer, Rossana Bisceglia, noted that a working draft of the student census questionnaire was developed and has been piloted in three schools, Fletcher's Meadow Secondary, Brisdale Public and McCrimmon Middle Schools. A number of internal stakeholders were consulted in drafting the questions, which will collect data on student identity, family circumstances, school experiences and student wellbeing. Rossana Bisceglia indicated that the census will be launched in November 2018. Grades 4-12 students will participate, as will adult students. Parents of Kindergarten-Grade 8\* students, and parents of students who are not able to complete the questionnaire will complete this on behalf of their child. She reported that the census is confidential, private and voluntary, but it is not anonymous. Each questionnaire will be assigned with a random code that is linked to student first name and last name, and accessed only by the Research department.

Kayla Tishcoff outlined the communications plan, which includes information on the census shared at school council and staff meetings, resources, including an FAQ and video, posted on a dedicated site on the Board's website, and school newsletter articles. A letter from the Director of Education will be sent home seeking parental consent for students to participate in the census. In November, schools will receive an Educator's Guide to administer the census and will schedule a time to do the census. A copy of the questionnaire will be available in the school office. Resources to help parents complete the census on behalf of their children will be translated into 20 languages. The completed questionnaire will be sent in a sealed envelope to the Research and Accountability department, and will be scanned and stored in a secure confidential database. A summary report is expected in Spring 2019, and the data will be used to inform board and school decision making. Paul Favaro reported that the student census will provide data on exceptionalities, safety issues such as bullying, and learning expectations. He stated that this is a long term process and a series of reports based on this data will be brought forward in the next two years.

There were several questions of clarification and comments from SEAC members. It was noted that: there is an intensive communications plan, including Synervoice, to ensure that parents are aware of the consent letter; schools are provided with the Educator's Guide, and the teacher will read along clarification for each question; the questionnaire will be sent home if a student is not comfortable with completing it and exceptions will be made based on student needs; options to respond include 'don't know', 'prefer not to answer', and 'I am not sure how to answer this question'.

---

\* Note: At the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, held on June 12, 2018, this was corrected to read as Grade 3.

**6. Student Census (Continued)**

The presenters confirmed that they will discuss with the Steering Committee, members' concerns about teachers administering tests for those special education students who are completing the questionnaire, the process in the event students can fill out part of the questionnaire but require parents to complete the form, and the suggestion to identify questionnaires completed with teacher or parent assistance, and include this in data collection and reporting.

SE-49, moved by Kathy McDonald, that the report re Student Census, be received.

..... carried

**7. Draft Special Education Plan: Section E/Addendum**

Superintendent Byers invited feedback, questions or comments on the draft Special Education Plan for the Peel DSB for 2018-2019. He indicated that the finalized plan will be brought to the June SEAC meeting. Reporting that sections of the Special Education Plan have been reviewed previously by the Committee, and posted on the test Special Education Plan website, he noted that the report today provides information on new and updated components of the Plan with regard to Section E and the Amendment to the Plan which includes lists of staffing information and class locations for 2018-2019. Ted Byers reviewed some of the highlighted sections of the Plan, noting that assessment/diagnostic information and IPRC Criteria Guidelines and Referral Process has been included for each exceptionality.

Special Education Coordinator, Tracy Bardell, reviewed the summary of changes to the elementary special education programs and locations, advising that the changes will help to bring students closer to the communities. Superintendent Byers reviewed the allocation of secondary school special education programs, noting that in most cases the increase or decrease in allocation is minor. He explained that changes in the Developmental Disabilities (DD) classes mainly refer to the decoupling of DD classes. With regard to adding classes to some special education programs, he stated that this is based on projections most likely because students are moving to Peel from other school boards.

Members voiced appreciation for the decoupling of DD classes and for locating Hard of Hearing classes to acoustically equipped locations. A member expressed concerns about the high number of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) classes at T.L. Kennedy Secondary School. Superintendent Byers noted the decrease of one class, and he described the location of the classes within the school. Associate Director of Instructional and Equity Support Services, Poleen Grewal, referred to decisions made years ago with the relocation of Applewood School and indicated that decoupling was not visualized at the time. She confirmed that Special Education staff will consider this going forward.

(Continued overleaf)

**7. Draft Special Education Plan: Section E/Addendum (Continued)**

In response to another member's question, Superintendent Byers noted that the higher number of Enhanced Learning Classes (ELC) in the intermediate level may be due to timing of the CCAT test in Grade 4 and the follow up psychoeducational assessment, as well as students choosing to attend a regional program or French Immersion. The member expressed concern that parents are being told that it will take three to four years to get to an Identification and Placement Review Committee (IPRC), and she stated that the allocation of classes between primary, junior and intermediate levels in prior years has not been as disproportionate. Associate Director Grewal, advised that in allocating special education programs, SERTS are surveyed and needs are reviewed to ensure that classes are based on needs. She stated that this process was followed when locating ELCs. Another member commented that enrolment in ELC classes is higher in the North, but there are more classes in the South. Associate Director Grewal indicated that the student census can help with a more equitable access to testing and programs.

.....

Dorothy Peddie retired from the meeting at 20:50 hours.

.....

SE-50, moved by Ann Smith, that the report re Draft Special Education Plan: Section E/Addendum, be received.

..... carried

**8. SEAC Conference Notes**

Referring to a request from SEAC at the April 2018 meeting, Superintendent Byers indicated that the report provides a list of ideas presented at the SEAC conference in summer 2015. A member suggested developing a running action list with specific goals, and progress being tracked on a monthly basis.

SE-51, moved by Jennifer Knight, that the report re SEAC Conference Notes, be received.

..... carried

**9. Advancing Equity and Inclusion in the Peel Board Study Action Plan – Inclusion Monograph**

Superintendent Byers stated that the above-noted report was discussed at the previous meeting and is being brought back for further discussion.

A member conveyed to the Committee a request from the Brampton-Caledon and Mississauga Community Living associations to include value based training that acknowledges the gifts that every student has. Ted Byers advised that the purpose of the Inclusion Monograph is to establish common language that will frame future work and professional development towards a shared understanding of inclusive education.

**9. Advancing Equity and Inclusion in the Peel Board Study Action Plan – Inclusion Monograph (Continued)**

Speaking about equity in terms of academic achievement, a member commented that students with intellectual disabilities are in classrooms where there is not much learning, thereby widening the learning gap. She remarked that, as a result, the students receive certificates, and cannot achieve the diploma without passing a test in unmodified Grade 11 and 12 Mathematics. The member advocated for more programs and opportunities, especially in the early years, for these students to achieve more and close the gap. She stated that it is their right to receive education. Superintendent Byers thanked the member for her advocacy and, describing some of the programs available, he advised that there is more work being done in this regard.

SE-52, moved by Mary Wright, that the report re Advancing Equity and Inclusion in the Peel Board Study Action Plan – Inclusion Monograph, be received.

..... carried

**10. Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule 2018-2019**

Chair Foster reviewed the 2018-2019 meeting schedule and noted that, with the exception of the meeting scheduled on Monday, September 17, 2018, SEAC meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of each month.

SE-53, moved by Thomas Corbett, that the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule 2018-2019, be received.

..... carried

**11. Letter to the Ministry of Education from Bluewater DSB**

SE-54, moved by Nancy Leaton, that the Letter to the Ministry of Education from the Communications Officer, Bluewater DSB, be received.

..... carried

**12. Question Period**

Barbara Cyr reported that the full agenda was not available online, and Ted Byers indicated that he will follow up.

Jennifer Knight asked for an update report on the Accessibility Plan, and the online location where the Plan is posted. Superintendent Byers confirmed that he will speak to the newly appointed Controller of Facilities and Environmental Support Services, John Hartzema, and will schedule a presentation of the Plan either in June or September 2018. Chair Foster indicated that there have been no meetings, and Vice-Chair Lawton clarified that the community aspect of the Committee was disbanded due to changes in structure. Associate Director Grewal confirmed that the Accessibility Plan is now being handled by Human Resources and Facilities, and that a report will be brought back.

**12. Question Period (Continued)**

Vice-Chair Lawton reported that Catherine Soplet, a member of the public, requested that SEAC be advised that on May 10, 2018 the Board updated its signature on the 2007 Peel Youth Charter. Catherine Soplet spoke about barriers to student learning faced by students with special education needs and from families living in poverty. The Peel Youth Charter puts forward explicit rights for youth, and sets expectations for best efforts from Peel leadership to ensure supportive programs and services for safety, health, education and jobs for all youth. Catherine Soplet had highlighted the 100 day campaign by Building Up Our Neighbourhoods and Peel Poverty Action Group, and their work for residents in Peel.

**13. Public Question Period**

There were no public questions.

**14. Adjournment**

SE-55, moved by Barbara Byers, that the meeting adjourn (21:25 hours).

..... carried