

May 20, 2014
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, May 20, 2014 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
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario Peel Chapter
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Brad MacDonald, Trustee
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for Blind and Visually Impaired Children
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada – Peel Chapter
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Mary Wright, Peel Caring Network for Challenged Kids

Absent:

Nancy Bratkovic, Canadian Mental Health Association

Also present:

Fauzia Reza, Autism Ontario Peel Chapter (Alternate)
Linda Standish, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel

Administration:

Louise Sirisko, Superintendent, Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)
Jaspal Gill, Associate Director, Operational Support Services
Suzanne Nurse, Vice-Chair of the Board
Joy Uniac, Superintendent of Education

Marina Amin, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

SE-47, moved by Jennifer Knight, that the agenda be approved.

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2. Budget Development and Grants for 2014 - 2015

Associate Director of Operational Support Services, Jaspal Gill, provided an overview of Education Funding for the school year 2014 - 2015. He reported that funding for Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK) will now be provided through the GSNs, and he reviewed details of estimated enrolment for the elementary and secondary panels, noting that the system-wide Average Daily Enrolment (ADE) is predicted to increase by 3,943 students next year. The pupil foundation grant, anticipated to go up by \$43 million as a result of increased ADE, includes expenses related to classroom teachers, supply teachers, professional supports, supervision, textbooks, computers, etc. The school foundation grant estimated at \$98 million relates to school administration, office staff and school office supplies. Associate Director Gill stated that the special education grant is expected to go up by \$13.9 million next year. He advised that the special education per pupil amount (SEPPA), is expected to increase by \$6.5 million mainly due to increased enrolment. The high needs amount (HNA) will go up by approximately \$4.7 million next year, \$800,000 due to the increase in ADE and \$3.9 million because of implementation of the Statistical Prediction Model of funding for calculating the HNA amount. Associate Director Gill also reviewed information pertaining to language and learning opportunities grants, which include funding for administration and governance, transportation, school operations, etc. as outlined in the report. He indicated that the net increase in funding to Peel is approximately \$68 million. Finance staff are in the process of estimating the expenses and a balanced draft budget will be brought to the Board for approval in June.

Superintendent Sirisko explained that implementation of the new funding model is a step in the right direction. She stated that special education is over budget by \$14 million and despite additional funding, will continue to be outside the funding envelope. She advised that enrolment of special needs students is on the rise, and she affirmed the Board commitment to continue to provide the required support for these students.

Gillian Kajganich, Coordinator of Special Programs, then handed out budget development activity sheets listing areas of need and priority as determined by the Special Education department. Group discussion ensued and members provided their comments and feedback, some of which included: sending special equipment home with student; adoption of "train the trainer" model; provide status reports on effectiveness of the empower program; provide more thought to inclusion; invite SEAC members to professional development workshops; introduce pre-screening for FDK students by incorporating a questionnaire in the registration package so that early supports can be provided.

Responding to a question regarding Ross Greene's training programs, the administration advised that a large number of staff participate in those workshops. It was noted that a pilot project is underway that would include teleconference support provided by Ross Greene to implement his collaborative problem solving approach in Peel schools.

SE-48, moved by Ann Smith, that the special presentation re Budget Development and Grants for 2014 - 2015, 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, April 29, 2014

In response to a query by a member, Superintendent Sirisko confirmed that the comments made by Chair Byers regarding changes in SEAC meeting dates on account of holy days was brought to the attention of the Executive Committee and the trustees.

A member stated that her question regarding an update on the Accessibility Sub-Committee asked during Question Period, was not recorded in the minutes.

SE-49, moved by Shelley Foster, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of April 29, 2014, as amended, be approved.

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5. Enhanced Learning Survey/In-School Enhanced Learning Program

Using PowerPoint slides, Special Education Coordinator, Donna Zuccato, provided details of the results of surveys conducted by the Board in 2012 and 2013 regarding understanding the new gifted identification and placement model. She noted that principals, special education resource teachers, enhanced learning teachers, in-school enhanced learning teachers, and classroom teachers were surveyed. She reviewed statistics relating to identified and non-identified students that are served through the In-school Enhanced Learning Program. Donna Zuccato spoke about improved understanding and use of the model. She outlined the supports available to staff in terms of training and learning resources, and provided details about professional learning opportunities available to Special Education Resource Teachers, In School Enhanced Learning Program (ISELP) and Enhanced Learning Class (ELC) teachers. Some suggestions arising from the survey, included: greater collaboration between the classroom and ISSP teachers to monitor progress and update IEP, more frequent sharing of information with the student; tips for effective IEP writing for ISELP; additional information on developing IEPs for ELC students, and how they differ from ISELP. It was noted that special education staff have started working towards implementation of some of the suggestions. Collection of data will be ongoing and it was noted that parents and students involved in the ELC and ISELP programs will be surveyed this spring.

Questions of clarification were responded to by the administration. In reply to a member's question about CCAT, Superintendent Sirisko stated that the test is administered in Grade 4 in Peel. She spoke about the importance of data collection, and noted the steady progress by staff in understanding the difference between students requiring enhancements and extensions. The goal, she noted, is for teachers to focus on understanding the student's learning profile and needs, and to have discussions about modifying curriculum, while providing extensions challenges and enhancements, as needed.

5. Enhanced Learning Survey/In-School Enhanced Learning Program (Continued)

SE-50, moved by Brad MacDonald, that the oral reports re Enhanced Learning Survey and In-School Enhanced Learning Program, be received.

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6. Insight Pilot Project

Chief Psychologist, Jack Kamrad, and Research Officer, Aimee Wolanski, provided information on the Insight Pilot project conducted in 8 Peel schools. Highlighting that the Insight Test of Cognitive Abilities measures 7 broad cognitive abilities linked to academic achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, it was noted that the test is administered by DVD in a group setting and available to students in grades 2 to 7, with the potential to identify at-risk and gifted students. Jack Kamrad noted that Insight Test provides four composite scores with respect to ability, general ability index, thinking index and memory/processing index. With Power Point slides, Aimee Wolanski presented the teacher focus group survey results on the pros and cons of Insight Tests. She noted that students meeting the criteria in the initial screening for gifted identification with Insight were higher at 3.6% as compared to 1.4% with CCAT. Additionally, following the screening, further investigation by the teacher will include testing with the Gifted Rating Scale (GRS) and an individual assessment with the Weschsler Intelligence Scale for Children – 4th Edition by a psycho-educational consultant. Jack Kamrad stated that although Insight is based on solid theory, staff have expressed some reservations about the test. He advised that, at this point in time, the Insight Test will be used as a screener only.

The administration responded to questions of clarification. A member commented on the need to continue efforts to develop and improve testing, and to work on resolving some of the concerns and challenges faced in this regard.

SE-51, moved by Shelley Foster, that report re Insight Pilot Project, be received.

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7. Secondary Gifted Guidelines 2014-2015

With a PowerPoint presentation, Special Education Coordinator, Katie Levalds, provided an overview of the process and criteria for accessing the Enhanced Learning Program at the secondary level. She indicated that the report is a consolidation of enquiries relating to various scenarios, including: students transferring from elementary and seeking placement for secondary Enhanced Learning Program (ELP); students new to Peel with CCAT scores but no psycho-educational assessment; students not previously identified as gifted in any school board, but seeking placement in the grade 9 ELP with or without a psycho-educational assessment with a GRS.

7. Secondary Gifted Guidelines 2014-2015 (Continued)

A member asked about placement of students with an IEP, currently in ISELP and receiving enhancements, who do not get identified as gifted when they enter secondary school. The administration clarified that students not identified as gifted will not be placed in an enhanced learning class. It is expected that they would transition to an appropriate program pathway that will support their needs at the secondary level. It was also clarified that the student would be provided with an IEP, should the profile require it.

SE-52, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that the report re Secondary Gifted Guidelines 2014-2015, be received.

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8. Special Education Programs and Services Report 2014 -2015 - Draft

SE-53, moved by Meredith Johnson, that the draft Special Education Programs and Services Report 2014 - 2015, be deferred to the SEAC meeting in June 2014, due to lack of time.

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9. Demystifying Learning Disabilities in the Classroom

Jack Kamrad reported that Peel teachers will be attending the Educators' Institute workshop on Demystifying Learning Disabilities in the Classroom, which is being sponsored by the Ministry of Education. He also advised that Educators' Institute have updated their website with information and webinars that can be easily accessed by the general public.

SE-54, moved by Jennifer Knight, that the report re Demystifying Learning Disabilities in the Classroom, be received.

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10. Question Period

Jennifer Miller asked about the invitation to participate in the Provincial Parent Association Advisory Committee survey.

Carol Ogilvie reported on the Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region's "Got Talent" being held on June 9, 2014 at Mississauga Secondary School. She also reported on the Registered Disability Savings Plan – Parent Workshop on June 16, 2014.

Carol Ogilvie provided details about scholarships offered by the Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region to students with a learning disability attending post secondary education in engineering and science.

11. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

12. Adjournment

SE-55, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that the meeting adjourn (21:20 hours).

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