

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 November 20, 2012 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada, Chair
Brad MacDonald, Trustee, Vice-Chair
Stan Cameron, Trustee
Lynne Cramer, Community Living Mississauga
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children
Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children
Meredith Johnson, Trustee
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
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
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Lorraine Yuill, Learning Disabilities Association of Mississauga

Absent: (apologies received)

Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario Peel Chapter

Also present:

Shelly Jan, Peel Educational Occasional Teachers (PEOT)
Marilyn Matis, Association for Bright Children (Alternate)
Mary Anne McDowell, PSSP

Administration:

Louise Sirisko, Superintendent, Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)
Pam Tomasevic, Associated Director, Instructional Support Services

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

Chair Byers welcomed staff and students from York University, and the new representative of Easter Seals Ontario, Jennifer Knight, to the meeting.

SE-93, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the agenda be approved.

..... carried

2. Authorization of Member's Absence

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Louise Sirisko, reported that Nancy Leaton is unable to attend today's Special Education Advisory Committee meeting. Nancy Leaton was absent at the September 18, 2012 and October 16, 2012 meetings. Under the Education Act and the Board's By-laws, members absent from three consecutive meetings must vacate their seats if the absence is not authorized by resolution.

SE-94, moved by Barbara Cyr, that Nancy Leaton's absence from three consecutive meetings of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be authorized.

..... carried

3. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

4. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, October 16, 2012

SE-95, moved by Meredith Johnson, that the minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, held October 16, 2012, be approved.

..... carried

5. Written Question

Lorraine Yuill, Learning Disabilities Association of Mississauga, delivered the following written question:

"Has the college English program at Lorne Park Secondary School been cancelled for Semester 2?"

Lorraine Yuill expressed concern that classes for Grade 9** English college preparation course have been cancelled at Lorne Park Secondary School and students have been asked to enrol in night school or summer school. She indicated that co-op has also been cancelled and expressed concern for students with exceptionalities. A trustee stated that there were 10 students in the college preparation English class and due to re-organization at the school, classes have been cancelled. Three options were presented to the students: independent learning program with support staff; night school; summer school. Superintendent Sirisko advised that Special Education Coordinator, Katie Levalds, has been working with the school administration and the situation will be reviewed with regard to providing solutions for the students.

**Note: Under Item 5, Written Question, the phrase, "Lorraine Yuill expressed concern that classes for Grade 9 English college preparation course have been cancelled at Lorne Park Secondary School" will be changed to "Lorraine Yuill expressed concern that classes for Grade 11 English college preparation course have been cancelled for Lorne Park Secondary School".

6. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

Louise Sirisko advised that Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is an important legislation to ensure that accessibility standards are being met and a multi-year Board Accessibility Plan will be brought to future meetings. She welcomed Accessibility Coordinator, Jennifer Miller, and invited her to speak about the legislation. Using a PowerPoint presentation, Jennifer Miller reviewed the Act, including: purpose and compliance; types of disabilities; barriers to accessibility; guiding principles; accessibility standards for customer service; integrated accessibility standards; information and communication standard; employment standard; transportation standard; proposed Built Environment Standard. She highlighted: feedback and complaints process; multi-year plans to be revised every five years; accessibility levels of website content; training for educators; compliance by public transit operators. Jennifer Miller described the proposed Built Environment Standard which will be incorporated into the Ontario Building Code for new constructions, major renovations, and outdoor public spaces, and deals with width of hallways and doorways, height and dimensions of shelves, width of railings and stairs, picnic tables, lighting, etc.

Louise Sirisko noted that there is a need for more work to meet the standard, involvement of parents, as well as communication and training for staff and volunteers. Superintendent Sirisko commented that the Ministry is helping to develop the tools, and a deadline for meeting the standards has been set for January 2013. Jennifer Miller responded to a member's question regarding public transit costs for adults with disabilities.

Louise Sirisko introduced Ana Pauchulo, Special Programs, Special Needs Co-ordinating Principal, who shared PowerPoint slides of accessibility projects undertaken at Gordon Graydon Memorial and Glenforest secondary schools. The accommodations include: upgrade of classroom for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) students to a 1:1 room for students to work in a quiet space with an adult; a sensory room in orthopedics; changing table and lift; Braille signage; Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) room; second accessible bathroom; two wide access parking spaces; new ramp; shower in new accessible washroom; rough-in for washer and dryer; elevator that stops at all levels; chair lifts.

SE-96, moved by Lynn Cramer, that the report re Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), be received.

..... carried

7. Open Minds Healthy Minds

Louise Sirisko invited Jim Van Buskirk, Chief of Social Work, and Maureen Mackay, Coordinator for Student Well-Being, to provide an update on Open Minds Healthy Minds. Maureen Mackay circulated the results of a survey on the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy which was carried out in May-June 2012, in elementary and secondary schools. She stated that the purpose of the survey was to gather information and baseline data in an organized and systematic manner, and included teachers, school administrators and Professional Student Services Personnel (PSSP) staff. The survey response rate was 87% for elementary schools and 100% for secondary schools.

7. Open Minds Health Minds (Continued)

Alana Gray, Research Officer, Assessment and Accountability, and Maureen Mackay reviewed the results of the survey in detail, which included: contributing factors; major concerns for mental health/addictions such as anxiety, depression, and substance abuse; importance of student well-being on academic achievement; measuring mental health and well-being; mental health as part of School Improvement Plan; capacity building initiatives; programs and supports for mental health.

Gillian Kajganich, Coordinator, Special Programs, led a group activity which allowed members to share ideas and provide feedback on the results of the survey. She circulated questions for guiding data-focused conversation. After group discussions, members' concerns were shared, which included: stigma and poverty not being identified in secondary schools; lack of parent involvement; survey conducted as a team and not individually in private; parents seen as a contributing factor to mental health challenges as well as seen as a support. Areas where mental health needs are being met were identified as: open dialogue, high degree of concern in schools, availability of supports across the community; schools indicating that mental health is part of the school improvement plan. Regarding gaps in service, comments included: need for frontline service and early intervention; inclusion of social skills in the curriculum; integrating parents into mental health well-being; awareness of resources.

Jim Van Buskirk spoke about the plan to address the concerns of parents and youth, working with community partners, and establishing supports that reflect the needs of the community. The baseline survey has provided input from staff in Peel to help with the plan. He outlined five areas of priority identified in developing the strategy: actively promote mental health awareness and decrease stigma in the system; promote a broad understanding of suicide prevention, intervention, and post intervention using training programs such as Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and SafeTalk; develop a deeper understanding of what mental health means in diverse groups in the community; continue to promote and deepen collaborative working relationships with mental health nurses and partners; increase the system's responsiveness to mental health needs. Jim Van Buskirk noted that the Ministry will be providing a mental health literacy training program for teachers. A trustee referred to a question in the survey about race being a factor in mental health and addiction issues and expressed concern about how the question is raised. Jim Van Buskirk clarified that the intent was to capture diversity in the community and recognized the need to refine the question.

SE-97, moved by Ann Smith, that the oral report re Open Minds Healthy Minds Program Review, be received.

..... carried

8. Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List

SE-98, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the report re Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List, be received.

.....

A member asked for the contact email address of Jennifer Knight of Easter Seals Ontario. Jennifer Knight will provide contact details to SEAC members through the Executive Member.

.....

SE-98 carried

9. EQAO Results by Exceptionality

SE-99, moved by Sandy Milakovic, that the report re EQAO Results by Exceptionality, be received.

..... carried

10. Draft Special Education Advisory Committee Annual Calendar 2012-2013

SE-100, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the Draft Special Education Advisory Committee Annual Calendar 2012-2013, be received.

..... carried

11. Student Health 2011: Measuring the Health of Peel's Youth

Referring to the report from David Mowat, Medical Officer of Health at Region of Peel, Superintendent Sirisko noted that: over 8500 students participated in the survey; 52% of the students were female and 48% male; 26% were born outside of Canada; 53% reported living with two parents and other family members. She highlighted the main points of the survey results and the concerns. The survey included findings on: healthy eating; body weight; physical activity; physical fitness of Peel Grade 9 students; use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs; social and emotional well-being; safety; relationships and sexual health. Louise Sirisko noted that the report is available on the Region of Peel's website and she encouraged members to share the findings with their organizations to raise awareness in the community.

SE-101, moved by Sandy Milakovic, that the report re Student Health 2011: Measuring the Health of Peel's Youth, be received.

..... carried

12. Communications – for Action or Receipt

SE-102, moved by Shelley Foster, that the following communications, be received:

1. Kerry's Place Autism Services announced the launch of a new website, www.vulnerableadultscwr.org
2. Letter to Minister John Milloy from SEAC Chair, Near North District School Board
Re: Concerns about cutting Special Services at Home Funding for special needs students beyond the age of 18
3. Letter regarding resignation from SEAC of Deanna Henderson, Easter Seals Ontario
4. Letter to Deanna Henderson from Janet McDougald regarding resignation of the Easter Seals Ontario's representative to SEAC
5. Letter regarding nomination of Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario as the representative to SEAC
6. Letter to Jennifer Knight from Janet McDougald to confirm the representative for Easter Seals Ontario to SEAC

..... carried

13. Response of Administration to Former Questions

1. Response to Written Question re SEAC Contact Information on Board Website

In response to a question raised at the meeting on October 16, 2012, Barbara Cyr expressed thanks to Katie Levalds, Coordinator of Special Education, for her efforts to increase visibility of Special Education information on Peel DSB's website.

Through a video demonstration, Katie Levalds, navigated through the new Peel website and reviewed items in the Special Education section, including: Individual Placement and Review Committee (IPRC); guide to Individual Education Plan (IEP); parents' guide to IPRC; links for additional information; links to member organizations; parent fact sheet. Contact information of SEAC members will be added once confirmation is received from individual organizations.

SE-103, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the report re Response to Written Question re SEAC Contact Information on Board Website, be received.

..... carried

14. Reports from Representatives on Councils / Associations

There were no reports.

15. Question Period

Carol Ogilvie referred to the recent ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada, regarding a human rights violation at a North Vancouver school. She asked if the Ministry of Education had communicated the finding to school boards and whether it has been reviewed. Louise Sirisko advised that the Ministry has not communicated the findings to Peel DSB. She mentioned that through local bulletins a summary and guidance has been received, as well as feedback from Associate Directors in that regard.

16. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

17. Adjournment

SE-104, moved by Lynne Cramer, that the meeting adjourn (20:55 hours).

..... carried