

November 15, 2016
Special Education Advisory Committee:lf

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, November 15, 2016 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada, Chair
Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, Vice-Chair (19:05)
Nancy, Bratkovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch
Thomas Corbett, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter
David Green, Trustee
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Sue Lawton, Trustee
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter
Harkirat Singh, Trustee
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Mary Wright, Peel Caring Network for Challenged Kids (19:05)

Absent: (apologies received marked*)

Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired*
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario*
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter

Also present:

Andrew Cruikshank, Peel Elementary Teachers' Local
Karen Del Ben, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel
Karen Hobbins, Peel Association of Secondary School Principals
Alfia Harooni, Peel Elementary Occasional Teachers
Daniele Roch, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

Administration:

Ted Byers, Superintendent of Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)
Pertia Minott, Superintendent of Education (Executive Backup Member)
Scott Moreash, Associate Director of Instructional Support Services

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

Chair Byers welcomed Thomas Corbett, Alternate member for Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region, to the meeting.

SE-75, moved by Nancy Leaton, that the agenda be approved.

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2. Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

3. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, October 19, 2016

SE-76, moved by David Green, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, held October 19, 2016, be approved.

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4. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Ted Byers, spoke about equity of access and inclusivity related to the Policy and Operating Procedure on Excursions with regard to the process of organizing field trips and overnight excursions. He commented on the importance of ensuring equity of access for all students in terms of physical requirements and financial expectations. Ted Byers shared an anecdotal incident and explained how through collaborative problem solving, staff and administration were able to provide alternate travel arrangements to enable the student to participate in a team trip with a teaching assistant. He expressed appreciation for the efforts involved in working towards the vision of inclusivity and equity for all students.

Superintendent Byers stated that the Inspire Hope Committee, which meets monthly, consists of members from various departments of the Board. He advised that for the past year and a half the Committee has been tracking the number of immigrants and refugee families, and supports required such as trauma counselling and special needs, to connect them with mental health resources and services. Ted Byers referred to the Ministry of Education's document on Supporting Students with Refugee Backgrounds, which is posted on the Peel DSB website, and noted that the Ministry's document on Capacity Building K-12, offers a framework for reflecting on current practice and taking a whole-school approach to successful integration of students with refugee backgrounds in the school community. He commented that In-School Review Committee (ISRC) conferences include discussions on mental health and trauma experienced by children, and are important as the first point of communication.

SE-77, moved by Sue Lawton, that the Superintendent's Report (oral), be received.

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5. Special Education Plan Development – Updates to Section E: Intervention Strategies and Procedures

Superintendent Byers thanked SEAC members for their input on Section E, Intervention Strategies and Procedures, of the Special Education Plan. He drew attention to the flowchart and table included in the report which outlined the referral and intervention process. Nora Green, Staff Development Coordinator, noted that after receiving input from SEAC, two main points have been added to Section E with regard to parent involvement and the teaching assistant being present in the In-School Review Committee process.

SE-78, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the report re Special Education Plan Development – Updates to Section E: Intervention Strategies and Procedures, be received.

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6. Special Education Plan Development – Section C: Service Delivery Models by Exceptionality – Learning Disabilities, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Blind and Low Vision

Superintendent Ted Byers thanked members of the Working Committee, Jennifer Knight and Ann Smith, for their efforts. He listed the areas of exceptionality when students are referred to the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) as, behaviour, communication, intellectual, physical and multiple. Photocopies of a brochure, A Parent's Guide to IPRC, were circulated. Using PowerPoint slides and diagrams, Special Education Coordinator, Tracy Bardell, reviewed the service delivery model for Learning Disability pathways in the Communication category for the elementary panel. She explained the process for assessment of learning disabilities and the placement process which includes discussion with parents and their consent to proceed with IPRC. She outlined two possible options offered. Wording in the Service Delivery Model for Learning Disability section will be reviewed and diagrams will be included to provide clarity. Questions and comments from members responded to, included: communication of information on assessment process to parents; availability of resources for assessment; difficulties faced by parents in receiving assessments and accessing services on time; need for a list of children waiting for services, which may also assist with staffing allocations.

Special Education Coordinator, Sharon Cook, reviewed the report on Learning Support strategies for secondary students. She advised that at Learning Support Level 1 (LS1), students who take the GLE credit course can earn up to four credits, and the program is offered at Mayfield, Brampton Centennial, and Erindale Secondary Schools. At Learning Support Level 2 (LS2) students are monitored by a special education teacher who collaborates with the classroom teacher, and LS2 support does not generate a credit. Sharon Cook spoke about the Regional Secondary Communication Program which is strongly integrated with assistive technology to support curriculum expectations and accommodations.

6. Special Education Plan Development – Section C: Service Delivery Models by Exceptionality – Learning Disabilities, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Blind and Low Vision (Continued)

Ana Pauchulo, Special Education Coordinating Principal, reviewed the service delivery model for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHOH) students identified with exceptionality in Communication, which includes a placement criteria at elementary level, service provided by an itinerant teacher who works with the classroom teacher, as well as support by an educational audiologist and use of FM technology. She advised that contained classes provide additional supports for students who need specific intervention such as for language acquisition challenges. Ana Pauchulo stated that for students who have not been identified and have hearing needs, an annual review process determines the extent of their needs, an IEP may be developed, and accommodations are provided. She added that, itinerant teacher support is also available to establish an intervention system for self-advocacy and use of technology. A member asked if the definition for Deaf and Hard of Hearing can reflect social and mental health challenges faced by these students as their difficulties increase when they become teenagers. Ana Pauchulo advised that the definition used has been provided by the Ministry of Education; however, she agreed that this point can be clarified elsewhere in the report.

Ana Pauchulo reviewed the report for Blind and Low Vision with exceptionality in the Physical category. She advised that a student who submits an ophthalmologist report is entitled to itinerant teacher support, and contained classes are available for students who are deemed to have needs only in blind and low vision area. Ana Pauchulo explained the program provisions, which include service of orientation and a mobility specialist.

SE-79, moved by Jennifer Knight, that the report re Special Education Plan Development – Section C: Service Delivery Models by Exceptionality – Learning Disabilities, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Blind and Low Vision, be received.

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7. Special Education Department Goals/Projects Update Report: EMPOWER and Language Live

Special Education Coordinator, Tracy Bardell, stated that EMPOWER is a specific and targeted reading program to support reading intervention. She provided background information on how the program was developed by Hospital for Sick Children through a learning disabilities research program. She advised that EMPOWER training was done earlier this year by a group of certified trainers and mentors, for teachers of Peel DSB's 59 Communication (COM) classes and approximately 26 ISSP teachers, and refresher courses for experienced COM class teachers are also held. In addition, a presentation to principals and vice-principals from COM program locations has been scheduled for November 24, 2016 and SEAC members are welcome to attend. Tracy Bardell advised that staff work closely on an on-going basis with mentors from the Hospital for Sick Children to develop processes and resources to support classroom teachers, and meet with them twice a year to review procedures and ensure integrity of the program. Responding to a trustee's questions, Tracy Bardell clarified that Peel DSB has purchased this program from the hospital, who provide intellectual support.

7. Special Education Department Goals/Projects Update Report: EMPOWER and Language Live (Continued)

Special Education Coordinator, Sharon Cook, stated that Language Live is geared towards readers and writers of adolescent age and the intent is to bring students up to Grade level. She provided an overview of the program which included: differentiated and personalized instruction catering to each student's needs; use of a workbook and an online component; benchmarks are set; assessments are done three times during the semester to monitor progress; students receive feedback. Sharon Cook advised that Peel DSB receives six hours of Language Live training which is also offered online. She stated that the program is growing and is being used at Humberview, Lincoln M. Alexander, Judith Nyman, and West Credit Secondary Schools. In response to a question, Sharon Cook confirmed that Grade 9 and 10 students can participate in the program.

SE-80, moved by Mary Wright, that the oral update report re Special Education Department Goals/Projects: EMPOWER and Language Live, be received.

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8. Response of Administration to Former Questions

1. Peel DSB's Mathematics Strategy

Superintendent Byers recalled a query at an earlier meeting with regard to a review of Peel DSB's mathematics strategy. He advised that the Special Education and Instructional Programs/Curriculum departments are collaborating on this initiative, and a School Effectiveness Lead who is working on professional development for schools, will be invited to speak at a future SEAC meeting. He stated that training sessions for elementary and secondary teachers have been ongoing this Fall, and an update report on training will be provided at the next SEAC meeting.

9. Question Period

Ann Smith asked for an update report on the teaching assistant allocation study by Consultant, Lindy Zaretsky. Superintendent Byers advised that the report has been received and is currently being reviewed with superintendents of education. An action plan will be developed, which will be shared with SEAC at a later date.

10. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

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11. Adjournment

SE-81, moved by David Green, that the meeting adjourn (20:15 hours).

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..... Chair Secretary