

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 21, 2017 at 19:05 hours.

Members present:

Shelley Foster, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children, Chair
Sue Lawton, Trustee, Vice-Chair
Namrata Balsara, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch
Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada
Thomas Corbett, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter
David Green, Trustee
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter (19:10)
Mary Wright, Peel Caring Network for Challenged Kids

Members absent: (apologies received)

Suzanne Nurse, Trustee
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living

Also present:

Manju Chandan, Peel Elementary Occasional Teachers
Kathy McDonald, Trustee
Michael Theodore, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel

Administration:

Ted Byers, Superintendent of Special Education Support Services
Poleen Grewal, Associate Director, Instructional and Equity Support Services
Peter Joshua, Director of Education

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. Approval of Agenda

Chair Foster commented positively on the format of the last SEAC meeting with a breakout session after the meeting, and advised that today's meeting will follow the same format. She reminded members that the next SEAC meeting will include election of Chair and Vice-Chair.

SE-80, moved by Jennifer Knight, 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 17, 2017

SE-81, moved by Thomas Corbett, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of October 17, 2017, be approved.

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4. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Ted Byers, distributed copies of a booklet containing Special Education department Organization Chart and updated contact information of Special Education staff. Circulating a handout outlining a summary of group discussions held on October 17, 2017 on SEAC priorities, he noted that collective priorities will be discussed further. Superintendent Byers thanked members for their input during discussions and invited them to provide further feedback.

SE-82, moved by Mary Wright, that the Superintendent's report, be received.

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**5. Special Education Plan Development - Section I: Health Support Services
Special Education Plan Development - Section J: Mental Health and Addictions
Strategy**

Superintendent Byers stated that Section I, Health Support Services, provides internet links to service providers supporting students. He expressed interest in keeping the list updated and invited members to contribute additional ideas for inclusion. Ted Byers advised that Section J, outlines the Board's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, which is based on the provincial strategy and the Board's mental health strategy, vision and mission to promote positive mental health for all students. The document also provides website links to resources for staff, students, and parents, as well as information on community partnerships.

Responding to a question from Chair Foster, Superintendent Byers clarified that the Board had developed a mental health strategy approximately five years ago, after hiring Maureen Mackay as the Coordinator, Student Well Being. He advised that eight priority areas were identified for the first phase of the strategy and three priority areas have been identified for the second phase. Maureen Mackay advised that the strategy will be focused on mental health in the classrooms and recognize collaboration and partnerships. She recalled a previous presentation on the mental health strategy made to SEAC, and indicated that another presentation can be made this year. A member asked about easy access to a contact number in case of crisis situations, and it was suggested that helpline contact numbers be posted on the Peel DSB's website.

**5. Special Education Plan Development - Section I: Health Support Services
Special Education Plan Development - Section J: Mental Health and Addictions
Strategy (Continued)**

SE-83, moved by Jennifer Knight, that the reports re Special Education Plan Development – Section I: Health Support Services, and Special Education Plan Development – Section J: Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, be received.

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6. Professional Learning - Autism Program

Superintendent Byers introduced Special Education Coordinators, Nora Green and Tracy Bardell, Transition Itinerant for Ontario Autism Program, Andrea Dowell, and Principal of Whaley's Corners Public School, Shannon Green, to present on professional learning for staff who support the autism program.

Using PowerPoint slides, the presenters explained professional learning for Inclusive Placement and Special Class Placement for elementary and secondary panels. Referring to the report, Nora Green provided details on 2017-2018 funding grants received, staff teams trained, topics of training, and role of the Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) facilitator. She commented that, with changes to the Ontario Autism Program, it is unclear how many children will be discharged from their current programs and that information is awaited from Erinoak Kids Centre. Andrea Dowell stated that professional learning is embedded through the TeachTown program which targets individual and specific professional learning. With the help of slides, she provided information on: TeachTown implementation in the classroom; usage in pilot project sites and in the Primary Transition Program (PTP) classes; progress made in sample PTP classrooms; motivation of students to access and use the programs and devices; use of differentiated instruction; use of data to follow lesson progression. Shannon Green reported on positive feedback from teachers on the TeachTown process which included, more individual teaching time, data collection helps with assessment and skills selection, assistance with understanding how students process instructions, and students enjoy using the program. Short videos showing students using TeachTown technology were viewed. Andrea Dowell reviewed job embedded support for secondary program teachers and professional learning opportunities. Superintendent Byers thanked the presenters and commented on how investing in TeachTown has resulted in increasing student engagement.

SE-84, moved by Nancy Leaton, that report re Professional Learning – Autism Program, be received.

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7. Memorandum from the Ministry of Education re Pilot to Improve School-based Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Referring to the report, Superintendent Ted Byers noted that Peel DSB is not on the list of 18 school boards selected by the Ministry of Education to participate in the pilot project to improve school-based supports for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. He stated that both public and separate, as well as small and large school boards, are represented in the study. He reviewed the targets outlined in the memorandum from the Ministry of Education for Education Assistant training and dedicated space for ABA practitioners.

SE-85, moved by Nancy Leaton, that Memorandum from the Ministry of Education re Pilot to Improve School-based Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, be received.

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8. Response of Administration to Former Questions

1. IPRC Meetings

Superintendent Byers recalled a question asked at an earlier meeting with regard to the number of IPRC meetings held during a year. He stated that this information is difficult to obtain as many IPRC meetings are held at school level and schools are not expected to report this information; however, information from Field Offices can be tallied. He reported that in October 2016 there were approximately 11,600 students identified and at the end of June 2017 there were approximately 12,570 students identified, showing an increase of 970 new students identified. Special Education Coordinator, Nora Green clarified that in addition to these new students identified, there are also students who are identified through the IPRC process annually, as well as transition IPRCs. In response to a member's question about accounting for students who have been identified, but have left the board, Nora Green indicated that the numbers are estimated. Another member inquired about the number of psychological assessments done and whether there is a correlation to IPRC identification, over the same period of time. Ted Byers offered to bring back this information to the next meeting.

9. Question Period

Thomas Corbett reported that Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region (LDAPR) has received some funding which will be used to subsidize psychological assessments in Brampton. He advised that the LDAPR also has contacts for psychologists offering free service. He invited members to avail themselves of this opportunity by contacting him or LDAPR. Thomas Corbett indicated that the subsidized charges will be between \$500 - \$700, and if the family has financial hardship there will be a process to qualify for full funding. Special Education Coordinator, Tracy Bardell, commented that the information has been shared with special education resource teachers and is also posted on the Learning Disabilities of Ontario website.

9. Question Period (Continued)

Barbara Cyr reminded members of the upcoming Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) meeting and anticipated activity at the SEAC table. She inquired about a one-page flyer on Special Education Support Services which was previously distributed at the annual Parent Conference. Barbara Cyr will provide a copy of the flyer to Ted Byers for follow up.

Namrata Balsara reported that the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, through the Local Health Integrated Network (LHIN), has allocated funding to CMHA Peel for services to clients requiring opioid addictions treatment. She provided details on the funding and the plan to use these funds, which will include nurse practitioners and addictions specialists, who will be hired in early 2018.

Trustee Lawton referred to a member's earlier request for contact information in case of emergencies, and advised that 911 operators can also connect to appropriate resources in case of emergency. She suggested including emergency contact information in school newsletters.

Jennifer Knight commented on SEAC Soundbytes prepared by other school boards to raise awareness on special education. She proposed that Peel prepare a similar format for information sharing on special education and SEAC.

10. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

11. Adjournment

SE-86, moved by Mary Wright, that the meeting adjourn (20:00 hours).

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