

October 21, 2014
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, October 21, 2014 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada, Chair
Stan Cameron, Trustee, Vice Chair
Nancy Bratkovic, Canadian Mental Health Association (19:10)
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter
Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children (19:10)
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario Peel Chapter
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for Blind and Visually Impaired Children (19:10)
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region (Alternate)
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada – Peel Chapter (19:10)
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living
Mary Wright, Peel Caring Network for Challenged Kids

Absent: (apologies received)

Meredith Johnson, Trustee
Brad MacDonald, Trustee,
Lorraine Yuill, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region

Also present:

Tammy Bowman, Educational Resource Facilitators of Peel

Administration:

Louise Sirisko, Superintendent, Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)
Scott Moreash, Associate Director, Instructional Support Services

Lorelei Fernandes, Board Reporter

1. **Approval of Agenda**

SE-73, moved by Ann Smith, that the agenda be approved.

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2. Special Presentation: Stephen Lewis Secondary School – Learning for All

Amie Tolton and David Badovinac, staff involved in Project 20ONE at Stephen Lewis Secondary School were introduced, and a video on positive learning environment was shown. With the help of a PowerPoint presentation, they explained the seven seeds for successful educational change: co-create a rich definition of student success; individuals do well when they can; fewer goals, more commitment; all stakeholders inform and enact policy; give power away to elicit leadership; support structures for student success; celebrate what works.

David Badovinac spoke of shared vision, collaboration and accountability, and outlined some of the main units that frame the curricula of the program such as, social justice and equity, academic globalization, and mental health. He acknowledged the support of the Stephen Lewis Foundation, and partnerships focusing on student ability. A video showing Stephen Lewis encouraging students, parents and staff to be tenacious and persevering, was shown to members. David Badovinac advised that, a critical challenge is to consider what is not working for the students. Amie Tolton listed some of the support structures designed to improve student achievement and well-being, such as, a later start of the day, common lunch hour, more instructional time, use of resources, and monitoring of students. David Badovinac reported that, in Year 2, academic data indicated that Project 20ONE had demonstrated success, and suggested dialogue on success of the program. In response to a member's question, David Badovinac confirmed that Applewood School is involved in Project 20ONE.

SE-74, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the Special Presentation: Stephen Lewis Secondary School – Learning for All, 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, September 16, 2014

A member referred to Item 6 of the Minutes, Links to Literacy, stating that there were several questions asked regarding that program that are not included in the minutes. Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Louise Sirisko advised that the minutes contain a summarized version of discussions on reports. She confirmed that questions and answers in Question Period are reported in the Minutes.

SE-75, moved by Nancy Leaton, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of September 16, 2014, be approved.

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5. Appointments to the Special Education Advisory Committee for the 2014-2018 Term of Office

Superintendent Sirisko recalled an e-mail sent to SEAC member associations, asking for nominations to be a member of SEAC for the next four years. The nominations will be approved by trustees in December 2014. A template of the nomination letter was sent to each association for reference. Louise Sirisko reminded members that the deadline for responding is November 18, 2014.

SE-76, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the oral report re Appointments to the Special Education Advisory Committee for the 2014-2018 Term of Office, be received.

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6. Terms of Reference for Special Education Advisory Committee

Louise Sirisko stated that currently the SEAC meetings include presentations, with the intention of building capacity, and knowledge of Peel DSB. She spoke of ideas to broaden the reach, such as generating a flyer to share information with families. Superintendent Sirisko acknowledged the work of Ann Smith in reviewing the Terms of Reference with respect to Ontario Regulation 464/97 for all SEAC memberships across the province. She shared information on how the coterminous Board operates with regard to SEAC, incorporating discussion on Parent Reaching Out grants and funding, as well as parent information sessions.

A copy of Ontario Regulation 464/97 for SEAC was circulated and members broke into small groups to discuss activities and projects that may have a broader impact. Groups shared their ideas which included: parent information session night to provide parents an opportunity to ask questions; information sent to parents through school newsletters, SMS or voicemail; inviting ideas from parents as to why they choose not to identify; need to back up funding requests with statistics which include unidentified Individual Education Plans (IEP); greater emphasis on advisory role of associations; projects to be debated and prioritized by SEAC members; orientation for members; clarification of representation and role on the Committee; service improvements and enhancements; discussion on narrowing gaps in the system; measurable goals for evaluation and success; more empowerment for members. Chair Byers stated that the Ministry has outlined expectations of SEAC in broad terms, in Ontario Regulation 464/97.

Superintendent Sirisko remarked that SEAC members bring different perspectives, and her intention is to engage the members in advisory discussions. She indicated that there will be future discussions to build consensus. Responding to a member's question, Louise Sirisko advised that the SEAC Terms of Reference document has been provided only as a reference, adding that for any changes to be made, a more in-depth discussion is needed, and a formal motion for Board approval is required.

6. Terms of Reference for Special Education Advisory Committee (Continued)

SE-77, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that the report re Terms of Reference for Special Education Advisory Committee, be received.

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7. Guided Discussion re Revised Policy/Program Memorandum 8 – Identification of and Program Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities

Louise Sirisko advised that she will be attending a webinar hosted by the Ministry of Education, regarding Policy/Program Memorandum 8 (PPM 8). Coordinator for Special Programs, Gillian Kajganich, referred to a copy of PPM 8 in the September 2014 SEAC agenda. She circulated a feedback page for members to provide input and ideas for implementing PPM 8. Some feedback was collected and Louise Sirisko encouraged other members to send in their feedback.

SE-78, moved by Nancy Leaton, that the report re Guided Discussion re Revised Policy/Program Memorandum 8 – Identification of and Program Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities, be received.

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8. Special Equipment at Home

Special Education Coordinator, Katie Levalds, stated that the Special Equipment Amount (SEA) funding assists special education students to access the curricula or attend school. Two components of the funding are: per pupil amount for computer software; per pupil amount for other equipment. She introduced SEA team members present, Tracy Bardell, Consultant, Betsy Clark, Resource Teacher, Cas McGeown, PC/LAN Technician, and Victoria Pavao, Office Assistant. Using a PowerPoint presentation, Katie Levalds highlighted: increase in SEA budget from \$ 1 million in 2010 to \$ 5.5 million; a 382% increase in SEA claims from 2010 to 2014; a total of 650 SEA applications processed in 2013-2014; migration to board-wide Kurzweil license allowing access for all students; professional development for special education teachers; SEA pilot project for taking equipment home; conversion to active directory.

Betsy Clark provided an update on work done this fall, which included professional development for special education elementary teachers, a technology website, resources and best practices information, Individual Education Plan (IEP) for special education students, review of process for digital technology, a web-based digital repository called AERO piloted by the Ministry of Education, 10 hours of training provided by Bridges Canada, and interactive whiteboard project training. Cas McGeown demonstrated navigation of the Assistive Technology (AT) website, introducing it as a one-stop shop for AT teachers and providing them with various resources. He advised that over 200 interactive whiteboard licenses have been uploaded and resources have been compiled for teachers and students using iPads. In addition, weekly announcements regarding Kurzweil training and other AT related matters are published on the website. Tracy Bardell added that a Twitter address has been added to the Assistive Technology webpage and information on training sessions is tweeted.

8. Special Equipment at Home (Continued)

Stating that the pilot project for take-home SEA equipment is extensive and will provide equitable access to hardware and software for home use, Tracy Bardell provided an overview of the process, which includes using documentation, resources, and feedback from students and teachers in schools. She spoke of the importance of parent involvement and advised that training will be offered for parents, and a flyer will be developed to help them support the child at home. Cas McGeown reviewed some of the features of the Kurzweil EcoSystem, applications which enable students to highlight important information, and access to a cloud-based library. Describing features of study tools, he demonstrated how text to speech tools are used.

Chair Byers and SEAC members commended the team on their work and asked for the list of applications. In response to a member's query regarding estimated time for implementing the take-home equipment initiative, Katie Levalds indicated that the Kurzweil software is expected to be deployed by January 2015 and the program will be accessible after that. Questions of clarification were responded to regarding: web-based program supports student's personal devices on which the full client version can be downloaded; white-board training for teachers; size and weight of laptops and back packs; log-ins and passwords; availability of tutorials, resources and phone line support for parents.

SE-79, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that the oral report re Special Equipment at Home, be received.

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9. SEAC Annual Calendar 2014-2015 - Draft

SE-80, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the report re Draft SEAC Annual Calendar for 2014-2015, be received.

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10. Communications

SE-81, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the following items, be received:

1. Ministry of Education: Minutes for the Meeting of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education, February 5 & 6, 2014
2. Acadia University newspaper article: My saviour has four paws and fur
3. Letter from Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant and the Mississauga Halton Local Health Integration Networks Re: School Health Support Services in Halton

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11. Accessibility Update

In response to a request made at the September 16, 2014 SEAC meeting, for an update report on Accessibility, Louise Sirisko stated that the Board is working on creating accessibility documents to launch training modules for staff. She advised that work is being done to meet the requirements of providing library materials to students with disabilities and operating procedures for service animals are being completed. Louise Sirisko spoke of on-going efforts to build awareness among Planning, Facilities, and Maintenance staff for establishing new and redeveloped play spaces incorporating accessible elements for students and caregivers. She advised that the sub-committee will begin discussions on a project plan and will decide on the frequency of consultations to be held, to create a more formal process.

SE-82, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the oral update report re Accessibility, be received.

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12. Question Period

Barbara Cyr indicated that she was advised that the Links to Literacy program is for ESL students and she asked whether the program is available for students with learning disabilities. Chief Speech and Language Pathologist, Lorie Grant, clarified that Links to Literacy has been implemented as a pilot project for all Grade 1 students with reading challenges. She explained that this program is expected to help students as they achieve phonological awareness, and added that ESL students are eligible. Louise Sirisko advised that the pilot project will help to determine which students can be supported by the Links to Literacy program.

Carol Ogilvie spoke of the definition of Learning Disability which helps in identification during school years. She reminded the Board to be cognizant of when a diagnosis is needed. Carol Ogilvie announced that October is Learning Disabilities awareness month. She circulated flyers on the program to members.

13. Public Question Period

There were no public questions.

14. Adjournment

SE-83, moved by Dorothy Peddie, that the meeting adjourn (21:10 hours).

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..... Chair Secretary