

## 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 Wednesday, October 28, 2015 at 19:00 hours.

Members present:

Shelley Foster, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, Vice-Chair  
Carrie Andrews, Trustee  
Barbara Cyr, Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter  
Nokha Dakroub, Trustee (19:10)  
Jennifer Knight, Easter Seals Ontario  
Nancy Leaton, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter  
Brad MacDonald, Trustee  
Carol Ogilvie, Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region  
Carol Oitment, Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario  
Ann Smith, Brampton-Caledon Community Living

Absent: (apologies received marked \*)

Nancy Bratkovic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch \*  
Barbara Byers, Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada, Chair \*  
Wes McDonald, VIEWS for the Visually Impaired  
Dorothy Peddie, FASworld Canada, Peel Chapter  
Mary Wright, Peel Caring Network for Challenged Kids \*

Also present:

Janet McDougald, Chair of the Board  
Fauzia Reza, Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter

Administration:

Ted Byers, Superintendent, Special Education Support Services (Executive Member)  
Pertia Minott, Superintendent of Education (Executive Back-up Member)  
Scott Moreash, Associate Director of Instructional Support Services  
Tony Pontes, Director of Education

Nicole Fernandes, Board Reporter

### 1. Approval of Agenda

In the absence of the Chair, Vice-Chair Foster chaired the meeting.

Item 9.3, Terms of Reference – Special Education Advisory Committee 2015-2016, was withdrawn from the agenda, and will be brought back to a future meeting.

**1. Approval of Agenda (Continued)**

SE-61, moved by Barbara Cyr, that the agenda, as amended, be approved.

..... carried  
2/3rds' majority

**2. Conflict of Interest**

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

**3. Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, September 30, 2015**

SE-62, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of September 30, 2015, be approved.

..... carried

**4. Develop a Process for Reviewing the 2015-2016 Special Education Report**

Superintendent of Special Education Support Services, Ted Byers, highlighted the critical role played by the Special Education Advisory Committee in developing the Board's Special Education Plan, which comprehensively describes the special education programs and services provided by the Board. He requested SEAC members to review the Table of Contents from the 2015-2016 Special Education Report, with the purpose of initiating a discussion on the process for developing the Special Education Plan for the 2016-2017 school year. The discussion will determine whether SEAC would like to continue with the same format, and help in identifying priorities, missing components, etc. Input from the discussions will guide SEAC consultations and meeting agendas during the year.

Superintendent Byers introduced Gillian Kajganich, Special Programs Coordinator, who guided the Committee through an interactive activity, with members noting areas from the Special Education Plan that they would like explored further and the rationale, areas they consider missing from the Plan, and their perceptions on Special Education Plan priorities. Gillian Kajganich indicated that input from members will be sorted by staff, and brought back to the next SEAC meeting with priorities identified. Input included: TA allocation and training; monthly consultation on the Plan; explore the review and development processes followed by other school boards; create sub-headings in the Plan for ease of use; elaborate on projects and areas for SEAC contribution; simplify document format. Superintendent Byers invited members to continue sharing with staff their ideas on the format of the Plan, and bring forward pertinent documents from other school boards.

SE-63, moved by Ann Smith, that the report re Develop a Process for Reviewing the 2015-2016 Special Education Plan, be received.

..... carried

## 5. Guidelines for the Allocation Process of Teaching Assistants

Superintendent Byers reported that the allocation of Teaching Assistants (TAs) is an important aspect of the development of the 2016-2017 Special Education Plan and accounts for a significant amount of staff work in September each year.

Reviewing the report, Coordinating Principal of Special Programs, Therese Fitzpatrick, noted that special education TAs are assigned to provide additional support to students identified with significant needs, in order to help them participate and achieve within the education setting, and to students needing support to ensure safety and wellbeing. Therese Fitzpatrick indicated that assistance may be required in one or more areas of need: personal care; physical, medical, or health; social or emotional; behavioural; communication. She reported that TAs are allocated by Special Education staff in three main categories: students with behaviour concerns attending integrated or mainstream classes; regional programs, including Section 23 program; integrated and mainstream students with special needs. She highlighted information in the report regarding the process followed by Board staff to generate a request for special needs TA support, and the annual review of special needs TA allocation undertaken by the TA Allocation Committee. Therese Fitzpatrick advised that the process is transparent and requires a significant amount of staff time and work, with ongoing review helping to track the movement of students and TAs.

Members' questions of clarification were responded to by the administration, including: need to identify opportunities to improve allocation and help students become more independent; critically look at efficient and effective resource allocation; needs of students with Mild Intellectual Disorder are met through differential programming, and support from ISSP, ESL or PSSP staff; process for allocating TAs to secondary school is similar to allocation process for elementary special needs TAs; processes for completing the Special Needs Assessment Form (SNAF) for new students registering at the Board and after they are enrolled; hiring of TAs is student-specific, onsite and job-embedded.

SE-64, moved by Ann Smith, that the report re Guidelines for the Allocation Process of Teaching Assistants, be received.

..... carried

## 6. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Byers thanked SEAC members for welcoming him on his appointment as Superintendent of Special Education Support Services. He expressed appreciation for the privilege of working with SEAC in an area of significant importance, and with staff in the Special Education department who provide excellent support to the system. Ted Byers spoke of his collaborative leadership style, and invited SEAC members to be in contact with him by telephone, email or through SEAC meetings. He referred to the Minutes of the September 2015 SEAC meeting when Carol Ogilvie had asked, during Question Period, about a letter sent at the beginning of the school year by the Superintendent of Special Education Support Services inviting input and information from SEAC members. Indicating that he did not locate the letter, Superintendent Byers extended a verbal invitation to members to telephone or email him with their input, as well as to share information on their associations, their goals, and visions. He encouraged members to plan with their associations to schedule special presentations at SEAC meetings.

**6. Superintendent's Report (Continued)**

Reporting that this is Learning Disabilities Awareness month, Superintendent Byers acknowledged the work of the Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region and the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario in supporting students and school boards. He also acknowledged the support provided by teachers, TAs, and administrators, to students with learning disabilities, and commented on their contributions to the success of these students.

SE-65, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the Superintendent's Report (oral), be received.

..... carried

**7. Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List**

SE-66, moved by Nancy Leaton, that the Updated Special Education Advisory Committee Member List, be received.

..... carried

**8. Recognition of October as Learning Disabilities Awareness Month**

SE-67, moved by Carol Ogilvie, that the report re Recognition of October as Learning Disabilities Awareness Month, be received.

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**9. Letter to Minister Liz Sandals from SEAC Chair, Durham CDSB re Consequences of Regulation 274**

SE-68, moved by Carol Oitment, that the Letter to Minister Liz Sandals from SEAC Chair, Durham CDSB re Consequences of Regulation 274, be received.

..... carried

**10. Letter from SEAC members, Peel DSB re 2015-2016 Special Education Plan**

Chair of the Peel DSB, Janet McDougald, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, welcomed Superintendent Ted Byers in his new role. Referring to the letter, which was titled, "Majority Report: 2015-2016 Special Education Plan – Peel District School Board", Chair McDougald indicated that she had received a copy of the letter and had some questions about the report. She noted the list of signatories to the document and she asked about who had authored the report, whether all members, including the Executive Member of SEAC, had discussed the report, and whether a majority of SEAC members had then agreed to send the report to the various recipients.

**10. Letter from SEAC members, Peel DSB re 2015-2016 Special Education Plan**  
(Continued)

A member suggested that the report be deferred to a future meeting, when SEAC Chair Barbara Byers is present. Another member stated that the report was sent to her by email, and that she was asked to discuss it with her provincial organization. The member indicated that the provincial organization reviewed the report and provided their consent to her signing the report.

Noting that trustee members on SEAC were not aware of this report, Chair McDougald explained that Committees of the Board are required to work together based on democratic principles, and that a majority report sent by a Committee without including all members in a discussion is problematic. Director of Education, Tony Pontes, reported that he had sought legal advice on this issue. Stating that the Committee should act within Ministry legislation and the policies of the Board, he noted that, while a select group of SEAC members can get together and write a letter, the group cannot purport to represent the Peel DSB SEAC. He pointed out that there was no notice of a meeting, nor were SEAC members given an opportunity to attend or decline attending the meeting. Suggesting that the letter be withdrawn, he advised that, either a meeting of SEAC be called and the report discussed and then submitted, or the report be amended to indicate that it is from individual associations and not from SEAC. Stating that protocols were not followed, Chair McDougald advised that a majority report submitted by the Committee after a properly constituted meeting and discussion, will then provide members, who do not agree, the option to submit a minority report. Noting that this process acknowledges that no voices have been left out, she asked that the letter be withdrawn. Chair McDougald then invited SEAC members to a meeting with trustees, to discuss how SEAC can liaise and advise the Board. Acknowledging the valuable contributions of SEAC, she stated that a frank and candid discussion will be helpful. Chair McDougald indicated an invitation will be sent to all members regarding an informal meeting on November 17, 2015, before the SEAC meeting.

A member explained that the report was discussed during meetings held by a select\*\* group of SEAC members, and that the signatories have shared the report with their associations. She indicated that, if there was a procedural error in submitting the report, it can be amended and brought back\*\*\*. Another member agreed that the report be withdrawn and brought back to a later meeting. Vice-Chair Foster advised that, with the agreement of members, the report is withdrawn.

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Note: At the November 17, 2015 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, the following amendments to the minutes were made:

\*\* The word "select" was deleted.

\*\*\* This statement will read, "She asked whether, if there was a procedural error in submitting the report, it can be amended and brought back."

## **11. Response of Administration to Former Questions**

### **1. Business Arising from Meetings**

Superintendent Byers explained that questions and actions arising from SEAC meetings will be noted and tracked, and update reports will be provided at the next meeting, as appropriate.

## **12. Reports from Representatives on Councils/Associations**

Barbara Cyr indicated she is SEAC's representative on the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), and she brought to members' attention the panel displayed in the room, which had been provided by PIC for SEAC. Artwork for the panel was created by Shelley Foster.

## **13. Question Period**

Jennifer Knight reported that the Easter Seals of Ontario has received information regarding a parent conference being held on November 7, 2015. She will provide SEAC members with updated information. Jennifer Knight noted that PAAC on SEAC has revised some resources, and has developed online resources.\*\*

Carol Ogilvie asked about the email address provided by the Board to SEAC, and queried as to who monitors emails. Superintendent Byers indicated that Chair Byers and Vice-Chair Foster review emails sent to the address. He will report back with more information. With regard to the letter she had referred to during Question Period at the previous SEAC meeting, Carol Ogilvie clarified that this was a letter from the School Support Officer permitting members to send material to schools. She then referred to the flyer she circulated at the start of the meeting on a Parent and Adult Workshop hosted by the Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region to be held on November 2, 2015. Carol Ogilvie noted that the office of the association has moved and that she will provide the administration with the new address.

## **14. Public Question Period**

There were no public questions.

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\*\*Note: At the November 17, 2015 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting, Jennifer Knight's comments were amended as follows:

Jennifer Knight reported that the Easter Seals of Ontario has received a Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grant to develop a parent conference on special education, which will take place in the spring of 2016, and include in person and live webcast options. She also reported that PAAC on SEAC has received a PRO grant for SEAC training resources. The funds will be used to update PAAC on SEAC effective practices manual and to develop online resources.

**15. Further Business**

Superintendent Byers reported that he will not be able to attend the next meeting. He introduced Pertia Minott, Superintendent of Education, who has additional responsibility for Mental Health, and is the Executive Back-up Member for SEAC.

**16. Adjournment**

SE-69, moved by Nancy Leaton, that the meeting adjourn (20:40 hours).

..... carried