

Minutes of the meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee held in the Board Room, J.W. Singleton Centre, Burlington Ontario, on May 3rd, 2011

Present: Sherry Foster (Association for Bright Children); Veerle Ryckewaert (Autism Ontario-Halton Chapter); Amy McKenzie: **Chair** (Halton Council of Home and School Associations); Vicki De Mone (Tourette Syndrome Association); Diane Vandebossche (Learning Disabilities Association of Halton); Lori Kafato (Alternate- Association for Bright Children); Lori Aker (Alternate-Halton Down Syndrome Association); Heather Holden (Alternate-Learning Disabilities Association of Halton); Lynn Trevisan: **Vice-Chair** (Member at Large); Jason Bartlett (Member at Large); Kristen Lochhead (Trustee); Karen Poole-Lawrence (Easter Seals Society); Jennifer Hlusko (Trustee); Kathryn Bateman-Olmstead (Alternate-Trustee)

Board Liaison and Resource Personnel:

David Board (Superintendent); Sue Roszell (Principal of Special Education); Pamela Cooley (Assistant); Nigel Scott (HSPA); Lisa Griffiths (PSSP);

Regrets: Judy Shiels (VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children); Jackie Bevers (Member at Large); Julie Armstrong (HEPA)

Absent: Patricia Molnar (PSSP); Dianna Bower (Alternate-Trustee); Maureen Smithers (Alternate-Halton Council of Home and School Associations); Paulyne Lack (Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario); Lisa Reid (Halton Down Syndrome Association); Patrice Shennette (Alternate-Autism Ontario-Halton Chapter); Lynne Gurzi (HDEAA)

Agenda Item 1- Opening

1.1 Welcome and Call to Order

A. McKenzie called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. She welcomed the University students in the gallery.

1.2 Approval of Agenda

J. Hlusko/J. Barr

#17-11

“THAT the Agenda be approved.”

CARRIED

Agenda Item 2 - Presentations

2.1 Assistive Technology- Marian Thorpe

M. Thorpe gave an outline of assistive technology in Halton. She discussed the guidelines for AT from the ministry. She discussed concepts such as cloud computing, apps, mutli-sensory learning, and the SMART inclusion pilot.

M. Thorpe discussed how the funding for AT is going to change in the next 5 years and provided a breakdown of how the SEA budget was spent this year. She discussed a plan for sharing AT in the next few years to accommodate the decline in the SEA budget. She also gave a brief explanation on how some sharing of AT would help in the normalization of it, as middle school students tend to not use it much because it is not seen as 'cool'.

Some members asked questions regarding software, student file confidentiality and training.

J. Hlusko expressed concern on this model.

M. Thorpe discussed the Nora and Dudley brown scholarship. The committee needs a SEAC member to help with the selection of recipients.

2.2 Special Education Budget- Lucy Veerman

L. Veerman elaborated further on the information that was discussed last month. The power point presentation will be forwarded to SEAC.

She mentioned that the Board is currently in the process of developing the budget for 2011-2012. SEAC can provide feedback on this. She also mentioned that professional and para professional allocations are going to be looked at. Updates on this will be coming to SEAC.

Agenda Item 3- Call for Notices of Motion/Reports to the Board

None

Agenda Item 4 - Action

4.1 Approval of the Minutes

S. Foster/ J. Hlusko

#18-11

Discussion took place on how certain points are documented in the minutes.

L. Aker wanted the comment surrounding the Primary Life Skills program to be clarified. The HDSA has concerns about this program and it will be clarified in the minutes.

H. Holden noted that her comment regarding the legality of not providing withdrawal services from question 5 from the public was not addressed in the minutes.

“THAT the minutes of the April 5th, 2011 meeting be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

4.2. Special Education Plan Revision Process

D. Boag sent the list of staff priorities out to SEAC. Discussion took place on these items.

V. Demone commented on having CYC's in every school. If mental health is an important issue to be addressed, then this needs to be considered a priority. ABC, LDAH and K. Bateman-Olmstead are all in agreement with this. V. DeMone also commented that other Boards are able to do this

D. Boag commented on this as well. Supporting kids at an earlier age would be great. However, realistically, in order to do this, other resources would have to be pulled back.

S. Foster noted that hiring a FTE doesn't always have to be the answer. The Board could look at other options such as bringing in a professional on short term contact that could be more affordable.

H. Holden commented that expenditures need to be justified.

J. Hlusko commented that SEAC has to remember to be realistic in their discussion on budget. In order to spend that much on something, something else has to be cut. It is a finite budget. Anything SEAC wants changed has to come from somewhere else. It is important to have data to back up all recommendations because the data is what will drive a decision. SEAC should make a presentation to the Board with appropriate recommendations and data.

V. Demone commented that all CYCs should not come under the special education budget as it is an inclusive service that needs to be available to all students.

H. Holden said it is important to look at a long term process.

V. Ryckewaert sent a letter to SEAC regarding the primary complex needs pilot project. A. Mckenzie read the letter.

D. Boag responded to the letter. He noted that although some parents have asked about this kind of project, there is still more research to be done on this. There is no definitive plan as it stands right now but there is a need to have further discussion about this. A small group of SEAC representatives should discuss the program and bring back a summary of the discussion to the SEAC table.

D. Vandenbosshe requested that SEAC would have a copy of the letter and noted that LDAH would like to be a part of that discussion.

L. Aker noted that HDSA is in support of the letter and would also be interested in being in on that process.

Tourette's Syndrome Association supports this as well.

A date will be sent out regarding a meeting time.

Discussion continued on the list of priorities.

H. Holden asked how the Gary Allan school support program fits into special education.

D. Boag explained that there is a lack of social worker support in all high schools across the system. Social workers from other schools help cover Gary Allan sites across different parts of Halton. This allows the high schools to get the designated support they need, and Gary Allan gets support as well.

V. Ryckewaert commented on the Asperger secondary school support. She noted that taking kids out of their regular school is a big disadvantage.

K. Bateman-Olmstead noted that there are 2 sides to every picture. There are parents that do want self-contained classes for all sorts of reasons. It is important to remember all sides and that people like choice. One size will not fit all and members need to keep an open mind during these discussions.

L. Aker commented that with inclusion the supports are not in place all the time. The proper support needs to be in place in order for inclusion to work.

D. Vandebossche asked how many Gary Allan students are exceptional, since their funding would come out of special education.

D. Boag said he will get a number.

D. Boag noted that he will try to provide a better breakdown of special education expenditures for the next working group meeting. It will be sent out prior to the meeting.

The location of SEAC working group meeting will need to be changed.

4.3. Assessment Wait Time

D. Boag spoke about the feedback from work group. The information will need to go to Board as a report.

Some issues that need be looked at include: Job recruitment strategy, informed consent, interpreters, streamlining assessment process and report writing, staff access to testing equipment and scoring software, space in schools, the whole referral process, database for tracking ongoing assessments, adequate resources.

D. Boag will share the data broken down by area (east, north and west) with SEAC.

L. Trevisan asked about doing assessments at young age.

D. Boag noted that we should have some of our Professional Services Staff come to speak to SEAC about this.

A. Mckenzie called for a motion to extend the meeting

V. Ryckewaert/L. Aker

19- 11

“THAT the meeting be extended.”

CARRIED

4.4. Halton Accessibility Showcase

A. Mckenzie thanked V. Demone and V. Ryckewaert for attending.

4.5. SEAC Awards

Nomination deadline has passed. A. Mckenzie will go through the nominations and organize the presentation of the awards.

4.6. Monthly Reports

4.6.1. Bullying (Safe School Action Teams Advisory Group)

Report submitted by A. McKenzie:

The Committee has split into three planning groups to:

- 1) Put together acknowledgements of current work done SSATs in our schools in the form of gift “resource” packages
- 2) An all-day SSAT conference for the Fall (tentatively scheduled for October 5th, 2011) and
- 3) Three Board/student created DVDs for elementary and secondary panels connecting positive school culture with the prevention of bullying behaviours.

All of these initiatives are coming on the heels of the highly successful and very well attended in-service in February.

The broad range of members and member expertise on this committee is phenomenal. We know all students can succeed in schools where they feel connected and safe, and we hope the momentum provided by the committee’s work this year will be flooding rather than “trickling down” to the front lines where the students are.

4.6.2. Protocol/Communications Committee

Report submitted by J. Bartlett:

Communications Activities

Better communications channel(s) for SEAC to communicate with parents

Evaluating what technological options are available within HDSB systems and what restrictions (if any) does SEAC face in using non-HDSB systems, such as a SEAC web site, discussion groups or social media.

Letter outlining our goal and exploring options available to SEAC is being composed and meeting with Bruce Smith (CIO HDSB) is scheduled for May 17th

Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant Application

An application is being drafted to request a PRO grant from the Ministry of Education to fund a series of “Coffee Chat” sessions. A copy of this draft has been sent to SEAC.

If funding is approved details of schedule, agendas and meeting format will be discussed within SEAC.

Protocol Activities

SEAC Committee Involvement

The committee will contact the HDSB trustees to obtain a list of sitting committees and determine if SEAC should have a seat on these committees. This list will be circulated to SEAC.

SEAC Committee Striking protocol

Request has been made to review aspects of how a new SEAC is formed and ratify any practices that differ from established policy into a new policy for SEAC approval. Considering the current SEAC is beginning a new term this item will be tabled for future consideration.

SEAC Meeting Protocol

The committee will investigate options for ensuring key points are reflected in the minutes while maintaining a desired degree of brevity in the minutes. The committee will review use of an order paper for every SEAC meeting to track key dates, activities and requests for information.

4.6.3. Early Learning Program

No update

4.6.4. Accessibility Committee

Meeting at end of month

4.6.5. Equity and Inclusion Committee

Report submitted by D. Vandenbossche:

- First meeting was March 23.
- Human Resources HDSB provided an update and held its first meeting the last week in March.
- The Board is developing Faith Accommodations through consultation. Input is being gathered on the website April 11 through May 13.
- HDSB has 8 areas in policy and 7 lenses. I hope to have a better understanding of this after the next meeting.
- We reviewed a handout re the Cultural Proficiency Continuum and plan to use this template to create a rubric using our 7 lenses.
- Input was received from students at the “Student Voice Conference”. The second annual “Student Equity Summit” was held May 3.

- Next meeting of EIEC is May 26, 2011.

4.6.6. PIC

No update

Agenda Item 5 – Communication to SEAC and Current Successes

2 letters have been sent in; one from Upper Canada District School Board and one from North Eastern Catholic District School Board. They will be passed along.

5.1 Superintendent's Report

No questions

5.2 Association Reports

V. Demone for Tourette Syndrome Association: 3 Km walk on June 5th at Lowville. Information on this fundraiser will be sent along.

V. Ryckewaert for Autism Ontario: There will be social skills training workshop on June 2nd. Information will be passed along.

Report submitted by D. Vandenbossche for LDAH:

- Reminder - Maggie Mamen workshop – What the Eye Doesn't See – May 11th at the LDAH office on Guelph Line.
- Plans for a technology clinic – LEARNstyle Assistive Technology Camp August 2-5, 2011. The flyer is here tonight and we will be reminding everyone.
- Windows to the Future – LDA Kitchener-Waterloo all day workshop May 6, 2011 – flyers are here tonight.

5.3 Trustee Reports

J. Hlusko mentioned the following that trustees are working on:

- Halfway through strategic plan development
- Budget meetings for 2011-2012 start May 17th
- Starting discussions on secondary start times
- Boundaries for secondary school in Oakville
- Burlington secondary school opening will be delayed a year to 2013.

K. Lochhead noted that trustees will be attending the June 2nd summit on children and youth mental health in Toronto.

Agenda Item 6 – Questions from the Public

None

Agenda Item 7 – SEAC Discussion/Question Period

D. Vandebossche wanted to remind D. Boag that she requested information from the early intervention team.

D. Boag said he can share what initial work has been done. The report on this will not go to the Board until the fall.

For the agenda next month, there is a possibility for Jo-Ann Trigg from Autism services to come and present on moving kids from IBI and transferring them to ABA approach. Feedback is needed on this for the Ministry.

Discussion on order paper:

H. Holden asked for clarification on what the data dashboard is from last year.

D. Boag explained the data dashboard contains staffing information and exceptionalities within the student population. Updates on this will be shared.

Discussed dates on order paper. Some issues are still ongoing.

Agenda Item 8-Adjournment

A. McKenzie called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

S. Foster/ J. Hlusko

20-11

“THAT the meeting adjourn”

CARRIED

Time: 10:02

SEAC SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
May 3, 2011

Hi everyone,

Just a few of updates this month

Pathways Conference – On April 17th and 18th the HDSB held their annual Pathways Conference in Niagara Falls. This year we had a group of dedicated teachers working on Pathways from a special education perspective. Our group has been tasked to ensure that all students with special needs are represented in our board's Pathways initiatives and that the Community pathway is a valued destination for students. They are also ensuring that students not currently on a traditional graduation diploma track are also represented for post secondary learning or employment. This group will be continuing this work this spring and in the fall and will be looking for SEAC involvement and input.

Psycho-educational Consultant Duties – last month I mentioned that a group consisting of Psycho-educational Consultants and Senior Managers of Professional Services came together to review and make recommendations on the assessment referral and completion process. One of their tasks was to review time spent on a variety of tasks completed by our Psycho-educational Consultants. The results of this survey are attached to this report. In addition, this group made several recommendations that will be incorporated into a report going to the Board for information hopefully in May.

Educational Assistant Allocation – this process is underway. Schools have submitted requests based on their particular student needs. Student Services staff review the requests and then administrators get together by geographic area with our Student Services staff to further review, discuss requests and determine final allocations for each school. The elementary process occurred on April 27th and the secondary process will occur in early May.

Accessibility Showcase – Another successful event was held on April 28th at the Halton Region building. Many local organizations and associations participated and the turn out, even on such a blustery day, was great. A number of our SEAC associations were represented and we had a SEAC table as well. If you missed this event this year, please consider it for next year – it was excellent!

Answers to Questions raised in the Public Question period. Below are questions asked at the April 5th SEAC with answers in italics.

Questions from April 5th SEAC:

- 1) If the self-contained allocation has increased year over year since 2005, how come this didn't go down as this Board closed 20 self-contained (LD and BRC) classes about 3 years ago?

Special Education funding has increased each year for several years. The funding used to support self-contained classes is a school board decision and is dependent on the number of self-contained classes in operation. The total number of self-contained classes has not changed significantly in the past 5 years:

Self Contained Classes	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
<i>Elementary</i>	72	72	70	66	72
<i>Secondary</i>	32.33	31.8	32	33.9	34.5
Total	104.33	103.8	102	99.9	106.5

The number of self-contained classes running each year is determined by the number of students, placed in a self-contained class through the IPRC process. If the number of students being recommended for a particular self-contained placement causes us to exceed the legislated class size, we would request that an additional class be created to support the number of students recommended for the placement.

- 2) Where does the money from the paraprofessional's collective agreement get included in the special education budget? I believe it is around \$750,000.00 this year? Is it specifically for assessments?

This money is allocated to boards to support all paraprofessional groups including PSSP staff as well as other paraprofessional staff groups such as technical staff. This funding was not intended for assessments. This funding has been used to support paraprofessional staffing costs including salary increases as well as additional positions.

That's it for now. See you all on Tuesday!
David