

Halton District School Board

Minutes of the meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee held in the Boardroom, J.W. Singleton Centre, Burlington, Ontario, on December 1, 2009.

Present: Amy McKenzie (Halton Council of Home and School Associations); Paulyne Lack (Tourette's Syndrome Assoc.); Donna Danielli (Trustee); Dianna Bower (Halton Down Syndrome); Karen Poole-Lawrence (Alt. Easter Seals Society); Jennifer Hlusko (Trustee); Janet Barton (Alt. Community Living); Daryl Potter (Autism Ont.) (Vice Chair); Amy Collard (Member at Large) (Chair); Don Vrooman, (Alt. Trustee); Lynn Clark (Easter Seal Society); Anita Phillips (Alt. ABC); Leslie Howchin (Community Living)

Resource Staff: David Boag, Superintendent of Education; Pamela Cooley, Secretary; Julie Armstrong (HEPA); Lynne Gurzi (HDEAA); Nigel Scott (HSPA); Patricia Molnar (PSSP)

Regrets: Jacqueline Bevers (Member at Large); Greg Allen (ABC)

Absent: Lisa Griffiths (PSSP); Bruce Jones (Alt. Trustee); Erin Walker (Autism Ont.)

Agenda Item 1- Opening

1.1 Welcome and Call to Order

A. Collard called the meeting to order at 7:03. She welcomed the presenters for the evening.

1.2 Approval of Agenda

D. Potter/ J. Hlusko

#39-09

“THAT the Agenda be approved.”

CARRIED

Agenda Item 2 - Presentations

2.1 OAFCCD Presentation- Susan Strachan

S. Strachan gave an update from OAFCCD. She talked about the new resource guide that will soon be available. It is an amalgamation of all resources into one helpful guide. The guide will help parents understand what their children will face as they progress through the school system. It also looks at transitions into the workforce. Copies for SEAC members are 15 dollars.

There will also be a document released from the Oral Language Foundation for Academic Success. It is geared towards teachers for K-3.

2.2 Primary Language Classes- Sue Roszell

S. Roszell gave an overview of the different types of language classes in the HDSB and their goals. She explained how the speech language pathologists are involved in these programs, including how the referrals are done for students. She also explained the role of the School Resource Team and how students exit the program and re-enter into classes in their home schools.

A review committee has been put into place. S. Roszell gave a timeline of what work has been done with this committee. There has been discussion around changing the Primary Language Class from 2 years to one year. A Survey was sent out to parents of students in PLC classes for input on the potential change (148 surveys were sent out).

A. McKenzie commented that the Pros of the 2 year program seem to outweigh the cons.

S. Roszell commented that committee discussion did revolve around the pros of the 2 year program. She is waiting to see what families think (survey results).

D. Bower asked if there is a good placement for these students after 2 years. She wondered if the committee was looking at something that could be put into place for grade 3 students for an easier transition.

S. Roszell said the focus is more on how the student can be successful in the program as it is for a smooth transition into grade 3. With another grade 3 program, the students would be in a self-contained setting for too long.

2.3 HDSB Website- Bruce Smith

B. Smith pointed out different sections of the website. He explained how more SEAC information can be put on the site, along with a quick start SEAC graphic on the Home page. He suggested that SEAC go through a process to figure out what content should be on the site, and how it should be organized. The same document can be put in several places on the site.

L. Clark suggested that SEAC information should be listed under the parent info heading.

D. Bower suggested that Student Services contact information should be listed under the Student Services section.

A. Collard suggested that there should be a special contact page for the Superintendents.

D. Boag suggested putting links to SEAC associations on the page.

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

3.1 Special Education Plan and Budget Review Process Recommendations

A. Collard asked for a motion to be made to waive the rules of notice of motion.

D. Bower/ A. McKenzie

#40-09

“THAT the rules of Notice of Motion be waived.”

CARRIED

A. Collard made a Motion to accept the Special Education and Budget Review Process Recommendations.

A. Collard/D. Bower

#41-09

“THAT SEAC accept the Special Education and Budget Review Process Recommendations.”

CARRIED

Agenda Item 4 - Action

4.1 Approval of the Minutes

D. Bower/ L. Clark

#42-09

“THAT the minutes of the November 3, 2009 meeting be approved.”

CARRIED

D. Bower asked for an update about having a SEAC rep on the Equity and Inclusion Committee. D. Boag will pass along information to SEAC.

4.2 Order Paper

4.2.1 Subject Acceleration

D. Boag noted there is some information on this topic in the Superintendent’s report.

For early years: The previous Superintendent asked for recommendations to identify the students who displayed characteristics of excelled or extreme learners. 35 names were received. It was later determined that these names might not have been appropriate and the project was put on hold. The department is still looking at recommendations from schools and putting a plan in place for to determine who these students are and ensure there is an appropriate plan in place (whether it is an IEP or a differentiated action plan) to meet their needs.

For students in later years: The department is looking at subject acceleration in Math. The challenge for these middle years is that school grade cut offs could affect the programming. If schools are K-5 or K-6, accessing the Mathematical learning from the next grade up could pose a challenge. The best place to start with this might be in grade 7 and 8. The committee is looking at a variety of potential options including doing the next grade’s math in the current class, in the next grade’s class or in the grade 8 to 9 case, possibly doing the math class at the high school or using eLearning as a possibility. These decisions would need to be made on an individual student/situation basis.

A. Collard noted that there used to be a program for grade 8 students where they could do grade 9 math in the grade 8 classroom. She suggested that the Board look into bringing a program like this back.

D. Bower suggested looking at the Hamilton Board structure. There are programs where student can complete certain courses early. D. Bower will forward this info to D. Boag.

Discussion followed on Subject Acceleration. The discussion mostly centred on what the model would look like. A one size fits all model would not be put into place.

4.2.2 Self Contained Placement

D. Boag reminded the group that there was a minority report last spring from HDSA asking for more parent involvement in the self contained placement process. The Board has revised the process to include more parent involvement and allow parents to visit the actual class prior to going to IPRC in the spring.

D. Bower noted that Halton Down Syndrome Association had some suggestions to modify the draft document sent out by D. Boag. She voiced their suggestions for the document and will forward these to D. Boag, and all of SEAC. She said the main concern is ensuring parents are invited to SRT.

4.3 Motions brought forward from November 3, 2009

4.3.1 Protocol Committee

J. Hlusko seconded the motion as J. Bevers, who originally seconded the motion was not in attendance.

D. Bower explained the intent behind the motion.

D. Bower/J. Hlusko

#43-09

THAT:

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Halton District School Board (“SEAC”) reinstate the SEAC Protocol Committee to review the recommendations, as approved in Motion 51-06 (“that the suggestions of the Protocol Committee be adopted”) at the SEAC Meeting of November 7, 2006, together with new information relating to the smooth running of SEACs and bring recommendations back to SEAC.

RATIONALE:

The recommendations from the previous SEAC’s Protocol Committee, although approved at the SEAC table, were not brought forward as a motion to Trustees to consider with a view to amending the Board’s Operational Policy as it relates to the Special Education Advisory Committee.

CARRIED

D. Bower will gather names of those interested in sitting on this committee.

4.3.2 Communications Committee

J. Hlusko seconded the motion as J. Bevers, who originally seconded the motion was not in attendance.

D. Bower explained the intent behind the motion.

D. Bower/J. Hlusko

#44-09

THAT:

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Halton District School Board (“SEAC”) reinstate the SEAC Communications Committee to review and update the SEAC power point presentation as passed at SEAC in Motion 52-06 (“that the SEAC presentation be adopted for use by members when representing SEAC”) at the November 7, 2006 SEAC Meeting.

AND THAT:

The Communications Committee review previous recommendations and practices of SEAC with a view to increased communications, including but not limited to, communication with Trustees, board/schools and families.

RATIONALE:

The Halton District School Board’s Special Education Plan identifies a part of SEAC’s role in public consultation as assuming “responsibility for speaking with members of the public...” It’s important that they know of SEAC’s existence and its legislated role.

CARRIED

Those interested in being on the committee should contact D. Bower

4.3.3 Financial Information

J. Hlusko seconded the motion as J. Bevers, who originally seconded the motion was not in attendance.

D. Bower spoke to the motion.

D. Bower/ J. Hlusko

#45-09

THAT:

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Halton District School Board (“SEAC”) requests the Board to provide the following information to SEAC:

1. Comparative statement showing 07/08 budget to actual, 08/09 budget to actual and 09/10 budget; and
2. An outline of where the 09/10 budgeted funds are allocated within the Halton District School Board’s Special Education Plan.

AND THAT:

The financial information requested includes monies received within each envelope as well as monies reimbursed back to the Board including, but not limited to, Section 23 and special equipment amount (“SEA”) claims.

RATIONALE:

This will assist SEAC in making informed recommendations regarding special education programs and services.

CARRIED

J. Hlusko noted that she forwarded the motion to S. Parfeniuk, who said he would be able to obtain the information needed

D. Boag will send some information out electronically, and suggested asking S. Parfeniuk to come to SEAC and go through the budget at the next meeting.

Agenda Item 5 – Communication to SEAC and Current Successes

5.1 Superintendent’s Report

D. Boag mentioned that the data dashboard is coming along and has some interesting trends showing. As information is collected it will be put into a more user friendly presentation form.

D. Boag mentioned that December 9th is the Ministry IEP review. There will be some discussion on best practices. D. Bower and J. Bevers volunteered to take part in this.

D. Bower asked if there has been any response to the secondary parent correspondence letter that was sent out.

D. Boag said there has been very little overall response but has asked principals to let him know of any feedback received.

5.2 School Board Communications to Parents re: Special Needs Students

D. Boag has some information from Redeemer College regarding a parent education series on Autism. The info will be placed in the SEAC binder

5.3 Chairs Report & Correspondence

A. Collard mentioned that she received various letters from school boards around the province, all of them to Kathleen Wynne regarding Special Education funding. These letters will go in the SEAC binder.

5.4 Association Reports

D. Bower thanked the Board for thinking outside the box in looking at placement options at the secondary level this year. Feedback from other students and parents was positive.

J. Barton announced that the Halton Accessibility showcase has been planned for April 22nd. Associations should email J. Barton regarding their involvement. Someone will be needed to do a SEAC presentation.

5.5 Trustee Reports

D. Danielli and D. Vrooman noted the trustees have been working on/discussing the following:

- Director Joudrie will be retiring in August 2010. A search for the new Director will begin soon.
- Surplus lands
- New principals and vice principals have been appointed and some are experiencing challenges in their numbers.
- Organizational meeting is coming up, they will be electing the new chair and vice chair.
- The Board has sent in its proposal to the Ministry on all day Kindergarten. This is report 0190.
- Procedures on student fees.
- Budget
- Themed schools. These include New Central (creative and critical thinking) and Clearview (innovation for the 21st century).
- Updating optional attendance admin procedures.

Discussion followed on Themed schools.

Agenda Item 6 – Questions from the Public

None

Agenda Item 7 – SEAC Discussion/Question Period

D. Bower spoke about a news release from the Speech and Stuttering Institute regarding the use of technology to help assist with speech therapy. This information will be sent out to SEAC.

D. Potter announced will be stepping down from SEAC, and will be stepping down as Vice Chair this evening.

P. Lack asked what training police officers have when they are called into a situation with Autistic child.

J Barton replied that depends who on the police force is on call at the time. They do not have experience training with autistic kids, but they coached when they arrive on the scene.

Agenda Item 8

8.1 Review of Additions to Order Paper

A. Collard will be putting on a monthly update from the communication and protocol committees and the working group.

8.3 Motion to Adjourn

D. Bower/ A. McKenzie

#41-09

“**THAT the meeting adjourn.**”

CARRIED

Time: 9:10

SEAC Superintendents Report
Dec 1, 2009

I thought I would start by including a brief update on a number of initiatives underway from the Ministry and CODE (Council of Directors of Education).

Learning For All – as you know the draft document is out. We sent a Board team to a Ministry inservice on the document. The Ministry is looking for feedback over the course of this year and will then be releasing a final draft sometime next year. Our Board team is discussing how to roll out the document and embed it into the other work already underway in schools.

CODE Project JK – Grade 1 Assessment – The purpose of this initiative is for Boards to provide feedback to CODE on current practice in the area of early assessment, identification and intervention. Each board will be pulling early primary teachers together to discuss what is currently in place and what additional strategies should be in place. We will be feeding this data back to CODE who will compile it and make recommendations to the Ministry.

Crown Wards Project - this is a joint project put out by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Children and Youth Services and Ministry of Colleges and Universities. The intent of this work is to find out what Boards are currently doing to support students who are Crown Wards and how we can ensure that these students have the same opportunities as other students in our schools. Cross-disciplinary teams in each region will investigate. These teams will have representation from school boards, colleges and universities, CAS and other community agencies.

Assessing Achievement in Alternative Areas (A4) – Boards will assess practices currently in place for assessing students and programs in alternative areas. Currently for students learning alternative curriculum (non-Ontario curriculum), there is little consistency from school to school and board to board. In addition, these students do not typically write Ontario EQAO assessments so there is no vehicle currently in place to track their progress and monitor program effectiveness. This review will help the Ministry to look at “best practices” across the province and make recommendations for a more consistent and accountable program for students learning alternative curriculum.

PPM 149 (Policy Program Memorandum 149) – outlines the expectation that Boards will develop a protocol for all external agencies working in school boards. The protocol must be posted on the website by Jan 2010 and would outline the process required for outside agencies to working in our schools. We have a good protocol currently in place that just needed some minor changes. We are working with our coterminous Catholic Board so that we have similar protocols in place.

Data Dashboard – staff and student data in raw form attached for your perusal. Some interesting trends can be seen in the data. We will continue to collect data and begin to organize it to make it more user friendly. Your feedback on this would be much appreciated. See data attached to this email.

Budget Documents – you will receive comparative budget documents for the past three years attached to this email so that you can start to review these in preparation for the budget process. I am creating a ‘cheat sheet’ to go along with the documents so that you will have a better idea of what the money is used for on each line of the budget. Not having gone through a whole

budget year myself, this is a huge learning experience for me. Hope to have a draft version of the 'cheat sheet' at the December SEAC meeting. Note that the budget document called Sped Department Budget is the Special Education section taken directly from the budget posted on the Board's website. The other document called Sped Envelope Budget Report is the budget for all items charged to the Special Education envelope and compares the last 3 years. This is the document that we will be focussing our attention on.

Response to Minority Report – last spring the Halton Down Syndrome Association submitted a Minority Report on the Special Education Plan (see attached). A response has been provided (also attached). The concern raised was that parents of children being recommended to move into Self Contained Classes need more information about the class and the location prior to going to IPRC. The Student Services department has revised this process to ensure parents are consulted about the criteria for class location and are provided with the location so that they can visit the proposed class prior to going to IPRC so an informed decision can be made. A draft plan will be available in hard copy at the meeting.

Subject Acceleration – A committee composed of Students Services, Program Services and Administrators have looked at Subject Acceleration for gifted and highly able learners. The general feeling is that we should continue to provide differentiation of program (depth, breadth and pace) in the primary years and consider subject acceleration a viable strategy in the upper elementary years. To get things moving, the committee is leaning towards starting only with math. Many complicating factors exist like teacher expertise in math, school schedules that would allow a youngster to move into the next grade's class during math time, JK – gr 5 vs JK – grade 6 schools, early transition to high school for math, eLearning possibilities to complete High School credits early, implications of accelerating several grade levels above peers, etc... Before proceeding too far on this, the group will be inviting SEAC reps for a consultation meeting to review the current progress of the group.

Parent Correspondence – see letter attached that was sent to all secondary parents for identified students.