



Minutes of the meeting of the **Special Education Advisory Committee** held in the Boardroom, J.W. Singleton Centre, Burlington, Ontario, on February 2, 2010.

Present: Amy Collard (Member at Large) (Chair); Amy McKenzie (Halton Council of Home and School Associations) (Vice Chair); Dianna Bower (Halton Down Syndrome); Karen Poole-Lawrence (Alt. Easter Seals Society); Jennifer Hlusko (Trustee); Lynn Clark (Easter Seal Society); Jacqueline Bevers (Member at Large); Greg Allen (ABC); Janet Barton (Alt. Community Living); Kathryn Bateman-Olmstead (Alt. Trustee)

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

Regrets: Paulyne Lack (Tourette Syndrome Assoc.); Donna Danielli (Trustee)

Absent: Leslie Howchin (Community Living); Don Vrooman, (Alt. Trustee); Anita Phillips (Alt. ABC); Patricia Molnar (PSSP)

### **Agenda Item 1- Opening**

#### *1.1 Welcome and Call to Order*

A. Collard called the meeting to order at 7:07

#### *1.2 Approval of Agenda*

Gillian Hall will present an update on the HDSB website tonight instead of the Learning Centre Presentation.

J. Barton/ J. Hlusko

**#04-10**

**“THAT the Agenda be approved as amended.”**

**CARRIED**

### **Agenda Item 2 - Presentations**

#### *2.1 Gillian Hall – Website*

G. Hall outlined some of the changes to the HDSB website. The proposed new site has quick links for all of the associations represented on SEAC. It also has more brochures from various areas of special education. The resources section has also been updated.

When the website needs to be updated, it will be done by a department representative. Any information updates should be passed along to the Chair.

There will be a direct Special Education button on the main HDSB page.

2.2 School Behaviour, Safety and Discipline – Odette Bartnicki

O. Bartnicki discussed the new policy document, School Behaviour, Safety and Discipline. She discussed the changes that occurred in 2008 with Bill 212 and suspensions and expulsions, and gave an overview of the HOPES program, which helps students who have been suspended or expelled. There are some students in the HOPES program with IEP's and most of these students have learning disabilities.

This new legislation (Bill 157) replaces Bill 212. O. Bartnicki gave an overview of some of the key changes.

SEAC members should email O. Bartnicki with questions or concerns with the new policy. She mentioned that it is important to have a SEAC member aid in the revisions of this policy.

The policy focuses on bullying prevention, homophobia, racism and sexual harassment.

There is a requirement that all board employees have to report any incident they see. Transportation drivers will be trained to report incidents that are brought to their attention.

Employees that work directly with students are also required to respond to the situation. They also must submit a report by using a designated form that is to be given to the principal. The principal does not have to share what action was taken to the person that submitted the report.

Principals are required to contact the parents of victims unless the students are 18 or older, withdrawn from parental control, or if there is a special circumstance that would lead to the principal's discretion.

Schools are expected to refer victims to support services.

D. Bower commented that this policy doesn't reflect students with disabilities as victims. There is a need to focus on raising disability awareness. Also, a lot of bullying occurs during the lunch hour. Lunch supervisors need more training.

O. Barticki said this is the kind of information that a SEAC rep would be able to provide in revisions.

D. Boag mentioned that he would soon be receiving suspension data of identified students and will be sharing this with SEAC.

**Agenda Item 3- Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

D. Boag welcomed K. Bateman Olmstead to the table, filling in for D. Danielli this evening.

Nominations for Chair: Amy Collard.  
No more nominations, A. Collard will resume as Chair.

Nominations for Vice Chair: Amy McKenzie  
No other nominations received, A. McKenzie will serve as Vice Chair.

**Agenda Item 4 – Call For Notices of Motion/Reports to the Board**

None

**Agenda Item 5- Action**

5.1 Approval of the Minutes

J. Hlusko/ L. Clark

#05-10

**“THAT the minutes of the January 5, 2010 meeting be approved.”**

**CARRIED**

5.2 Order Paper

5.2.1 Special Education Plan and Budget Report

A. Collard said the first meeting was productive. Submissions have been sent out to SEAC.

5.2.2 Protocol and Communications Committee Report

J. Barton commented that the committee had their first meeting. They discussed several issues and would be meeting again on Feb 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM. They will be bringing back another report to the next SEAC meeting.

5.2.3 Communications Committee Report

A SEAC power point outline has been given to everyone. If anyone has adjustments, they are to let the committee know. The committee discussed having flyers from each association put into a package that can be sent to every school. They also discussed the idea of having information nights for topics such as the IEP process. They also talked about implementing the SEAC circular. The committee would like SEAC to vote on accepting the SEAC power point presentation.

A. Collard made a Motion to waive the rules of Notice of Motion

D. Bower/ J. Barton.

#06-10

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

**CARRIED**

A. Collard made a motion to accept the SEAC presentation.

J. Barton/ D. Bower

#07-10

**“THAT the SEAC outline as presented by the Communications Committee be accepted.”**

**CARRIED**

5.2.4 Accessibility Committee Report

J. Barton mentioned that the Halton Accessibility Showcase is April 22<sup>nd</sup>. They would like representation from SEAC there. Volunteers need to let J. Barton know if they can attend.

A. Collard will send out a reminder email.

**Agenda Item 6 – Communication to SEAC and Current Successes**

**6.1 Superintendent's Report**

D. Boag mentioned the following points:

Research is working on corrections to the Special Needs EQAO data and it will be sent out when it is ready.

Some data was shared with SEAC in the written Superintendent's Report. The data reveals some significant numbers in growth over the past few years. There is a need to look at this info to drive some recommendations around resources for next year. This is an ongoing piece.

The three Community Consultation evenings are set for next week. People have asked why there isn't a session in Halton Hills area. D. Boag will try to find a date where some reps are available to see if there can be a session there as well.

The Central Gifted Information evening is being reinstated and will take place on April 8<sup>th</sup>. The format has been reworked. Schools will still hold their own individual evenings.

D. Boag received a letter from Autism Ontario saying that Erin Walker is going to be stepping down. Autism Ontario is actively looking for more reps.

D. Bower noted that the special needs kindergarten night is on February 25<sup>th</sup> at Bruce Trail. There should be some SEAC reps there.

A. McKenzie commented that the administrator surveys that D. Boag sent out were very useful.

**6.2 School Board Communications to Parents re: Special Needs Students**

D. Boag mentioned there was a letter sent out this month advertising the "special needs kindergarten students" information evening.

**6.3 Chairs Report & Correspondence**

None

A. Collard thanked SEAC for Chair nomination.

**6.4 Association Reports**

D. Bower had an association report from Halton Down Syndrome Association: Our Provincial Association has received an invitation to attend the stakeholder consultation sessions on the school health support services with the Ministry of Health in Toronto on February 16<sup>th</sup>. Our local association has been and is working with our provincial organization in this matter.

J. Barton reminded everyone about the Transition for Families to High School meeting tomorrow night.

## 6.5 Trustee Reports

J. Hlusko mentioned these items for the trustees report:

- There have been some Long Term Accommodation Plan revisions.
- There was a discussion with the Director on the use of one time only dollars.
- A new search firm has been put in place for interviews for the search for a new Director.

All 11 trustees have formed a committee responsible for the Director Search. The Board has hired Paul Stanley's team at Odgers Berndtson. They are seeking input from stakeholders, and trustees want to hear any comments SEAC members would like to share. Due to the personal nature of these discussions, and people's tendencies to compare personalities in their role of Director, the trustees decided it would be preferred if SEAC's input is received individually. Hence, if any member of SEAC wishes to give input, they should telephone or email any of the 4 SEAC trustees, or any trustee of the Board or they directly contact the Chair of the Board.

SEAC members should contact D. Danielli if they want more information before providing input, as J. Hlusko will be away.

### **Agenda Item 7 – Questions from the Public**

None

### **Agenda Item 8 – SEAC Discussion/Question Period**

D. Bower mentioned that a report went to trustees on student fees. The report didn't include fees charged to families for life skills or self contained.

D. Boag mentioned those pieces are part of the program so they wouldn't bear fees.

Discussion followed on student fees.

D. Bower asked about secondary families who aren't involved in exams. For these families, students end up not going to school for the exam period. This is hard on families who have to pay for a worker. She asked if the board is looking at some other ideas on programming that can run during exam time.

D. Boag said that there may not be consistent practice throughout the Board. The Centre kids are in school during exams and the Life skills kids are typically there for some of the days. In the Centre, teachers don't have exam responsibilities and continue programming for the kids. Life skills teachers often have regular classes and exam responsibilities, which makes running Life Skill classes right through the exam period challenging. D. Boag will try to find out what is happening in all schools offering these self-contained programs.

D. Bower would appreciate the Board looking into this. There needs to be consistency.

D. Bower noted that she had to resign from PIC. It is important to have a SEAC rep on that committee. The committee is also looking at working with other departments to bring Stuart Ablon back to Halton in March.

Anyone who can volunteer for the PIC committee should let the Chair know. There should be an update from PIC on the agenda monthly.

A. Collard will send out an email to look for a volunteer.

D. Bower mentioned that issues with the Long Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP) have been raised during the Spec Ed Plan review. She would like to ensure that these issues are passed to the trustees.

A. Collard can forward priorities that have been put together that deal with accommodations.

Discussion followed on this topic.

J. Hlusko noted that any input should go to Superintendent Parfeniuk on a regular basis.

K. Bateman Olmstead said it is important for members to go out to LTAP nights.

D. Boag noted that Superintendent Tutton is doing secondary program review. He came to Student Services looking for feedback on SPED programs. This is an ongoing piece which will have more discussion.

S. Roszell gave an update on all day kindergarten. There are continuous meetings about this issue with reps from many departments. The current questions and answers have been posted on the website.

D. Bower did send some questions form HDSA and S. Roszell went over the some answers for these questions.

S. Roszell will bring back more information each month.

Discussion followed on how the daycare spots would be allocated to special needs students, what staff will be covering the early morning hours (teacher, ECE) and under which act would it be.

There are not any definitive answers on this issue and it will stay on the order paper.

### **Agenda Item 9 - Adjournment**

#### *9.1 Review of Additions to Order Paper*

S. Roszell will report monthly on all day kindergarten.

#### *9.2 Motion to Adjourn*

D. Bower/ J. Barton

**#08-10**

**“THAT the meeting adjourn.”**

**CARRIED**

Time: 9:07

## **SEAC Superintendent's Report Feb 2, 2010**

### **EQAO Special Needs Students**

As you may have seen when the Directors Annual Report came out, it appeared that our special education students did much more poorly last year on the provincial assessments in most areas (see page 10 of Directors Annual Report 2008/2009 posted on website). While reviewing these results, it became apparent that the data did not make sense and that in fact had been reported incorrectly for the past number of years. From 2007/08 and prior, gifted students were included in the data and in 2008/09, the gifted students were not included in the results. Provincially gifted students are pulled out for reporting purposes. Bad news is that this finding shows us that in fact our special needs students (excluding gifted) have not done near as well historically as we would have thought. Good news is that we did not drop dramatically as shown in the Directors Report this past year. Research is reworking the data for us. I will share this with you when we have clean numbers.

### **Administrator Feedback**

Over the fall and early winter I have run focus group sessions with secondary and elementary administrators to learn what their views are on special education in their schools (challenges, successes, needs, issues, etc....). The following is my general analysis of their observations based on the frequency of responses in certain areas. The raw data can be found as an additional attachment to this report.

### **Data Update**

As a system, Halton has grown significantly in the past 5 years, as has our special needs population. The following show a few trends:

- Total student enrolment has grown 11.6% in the last 5 years
- In the last 5 years, the percentage of our total population with IEPS has increased approx by 3.5- 4% (from approximately 9% to over 12 % of our population)
- This equates to 2125 additional students with IEPs - 49% increase in number of students with IEPs

### **Student Services Priorities for Next Year**

The Student Services Department is busy evaluating the programs, supports, services and resources we currently have in place and what is needed for next year. One of the huge challenges we have is determining future needs in a school board that is rapidly growing and has a disproportionately increasing special needs population. We of course are looking forward to recommendations that come from SEAC and our parents/communities.

## **Community Consultation Evenings**

Just a reminder of the SEAC community consultation meetings on the following evenings:

Monday, February 8th @ 7:00 p.m. (Milton District High School)

Tuesday, February 9th @ 7:00 p.m. (MM Robinson High School)

Wednesday, February 10th @ 7:00 p.m. (Abbey Park High School)

Please promote these with your associations. Parents and community members are of course welcome to attend any session in any of the geographic areas. We will need 4 – 5 SEAC reps at each session to run small group feedback sessions using some prepared questions. Please let me know what questions you would like to ask and our board staff can run copies to use for the evening.

## **Special Needs Kindergarten Information Evening**

The Special Needs Kindergarten Information Evening will take place on February 25<sup>th</sup> at Bruce Trail Public School in Milton at 7:00 PM. SEAC has been invited to participate in this event.

## **SEAC Association Promotion**

At the last meeting, the issue of sharing SEAC Association pamphlets with schools and parents was raised. There are two easy options to consider. First, the web site is the obvious and environmentally friendly choice. The updated “phase 1” of the Special Education portion of the Website is almost ready to go live. Please email your brochures to Pamela and we will ensure they get posted on the website on our SEAC pages. We can also facilitate sending pamphlets to our schools. We would need associations to bundle them up in envelopes and we could send them through our interoffice mail to schools to avoid postage costs.