

# 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 January 8, 2008.

Present: Donna Danielli (Chair, Trustee); Amy Collard (Vice Chair, Member at Large); Don Vrooman, (Trustee); Mary Elizabeth Dilly (Trustee); Amy McKenzie (Halton Council of Home and School); Sheri Levy-Abraham (LDAH); Lynn Clark (Easter Seal Society); Paulyne Lack (Tourette's Syndrome Assoc.); Jacqueline Bevers (Member at Large); Ellen Whitehouse (Alt. Halton Down Syndrome); Craig Newman (Alt. VIEWS); Cindy Faria (Autism Ontario); Greg Allen (ABC); Leslie Howchin (Community Living); Sara Budworth (Member at Large); Bill Elgie (late arrival) (Alt. ABC)

Resource Staff: Kathy Schaffer, Superintendent of Education; Lynnette Dwyer, Secretary; Mark Wickens (HEPA); Lynne Gurzi (HDEAA); Michelle Joly (PSSP)

Regrets: Karen Poole-Lawrence (Alt. Easter Seals Society); Maggie Diltz (VOICE); Susan Wolak, (VIEWS); Lisa Griffiths (PSSP); Diane Doherty, (Cdn. Mental Health); Janet Barton (Alt. Community Living); Jennifer Hlusko (Trustee)

Absent: Cecilia Marie Flynn (Alt. Cdn. Mental Health); Sue Adams (Alt. LDAH); Mary Jane Farrish (HSPA);

## Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 7:30 p.m.

In Susan Wolak's absence, Craig Newman will be voting member for VIEWS.

There is no representative for Canadian Mental Health Association or VOICE.

Chair Danielli welcomed all the student teachers attending the meeting from Charles Sturt University. She also welcomed Odette Bartnicki and Jacki Oxley who will be doing a power point presentation this evening.

## 1. Approval of Agenda

P. Lack/A. Collard

#01-08

**“THAT the Agenda be approved.**

**CARRIED**

**2. Minutes of Meeting December 4th, 2007**

P. Lack/A. Collard

#02-08

**“THAT the Minutes of the meeting be approved”.**

**CARRIED**

**3. Call for Notices of Motion**

E. Whitehouse, Alt. for Halton Down Syndrome Assoc. read 3 motions:

**Notice of Motion #1**

**Rationale:**

The current administration divides the service provision of speech by one ministry and language by another ministry, which means:

- Children may only receive assistance from one provider, not both – their speech language issues may only be half addressed by a provider who is fully trained to help with the whole problem.
- Some children, who clearly have speech language problems, fail the criteria for speech and language assistance; so receive no help.
- It is difficult to attract and retain good personnel in the public assistance domain when they are mandated to perform using only half of their professional training.
- Speech and oral language expression/reception are the precursor to strong literacy skills. The connection is well documented. Given the Ministry of Education’s current emphasis on literacy skills, it would be a prudent investment for them to analyse the provision of speech and language services.

**Motion:**

THAT:

S.E.A.C. write a letter to the Ministries of Education, Health and Long Term Care and Children & Youth Services requesting a change in the current administration of speech and language services to school age children and,

That S.E.A.C copy this letter to other S.E.A.C.’s, CASPLO and Speech Language providers for their support.

**Motion #2**

**Rationale:**

- The Halton District School Board rightfully tries for equality within the 3 areas of Halton: North, East and West. Programs and services are offered equally within each area.
- Given the tremendous growth in the North (Milton is double the rate of the western oil-boom towns, far outstripping Burlington and Oakville) and distances student’s must travel, now is the time to plan for adequate personnel and the infrastructure in new schools and renovated schools to accommodate students in their local area.

- It is an opportunity to consider at what point the East and West areas need to be subdivided (i.e. Is there a critical limit in population or number of schools when the Itinerant Teachers and other personnel can no longer service the area properly?)

**Motion:**

**THAT:**

S.E.A.C. request that the Trustees develop criteria for a fourth “area” in Halton i.e. set the parameters for a “near North” area and a “far North” area.

**Motion #3**

**Rationale:**

- Part of the role of the SERT, as outlined in the Special Education Plan, is to collaborate with teachers, parents and others in the formulation of an I.E.P. (for students who need it – identified or not) and provide direct service to all students with an I.E.P., monitor their progress and provide support and consultation; it may be a large, identifiable block of time; therefore it should be included in the formula.
- I believe it has been agreed in the past that student’s who are formally or informally identified should receive the same support with the regular classroom; therefore students not identified with I.E.P.’s are the same amount of work as formally identified students. Using school population EQAO results in the calculation can account for the other student assistance “deemed appropriate through an in-school process” and all the coordination of evaluation and consultation SERT’s perform, it may not adequately account for unidentified students with I.E.P.’s.
- Given the high SERT turnover and workload, it is at least worth identifying and evaluating as a formula item.

**Motion:**

**THAT:**

S.E.A.C. recommend the inclusion of non-identified students (any who have an I.E.P.) in the formula of the SERT allocation, to be equally weighed with identified students.

D. Vrooman requested a motion to discuss Motion #1 tonight.

D. Vrooman/C. Faria

**#03-08**

**“THAT motion #1 brought by Halton Down Syndrome be discussed this evening”.**

**CARRIED**

Discussion of Motion #1.

E. Whitehouse/P. Lack

**#04-08**

**THAT:**

**S.E.A.C. write a letter to the Ministries of Education, Health and Long Term Care and Children & Youth Services requesting a change in the current administration of speech and language services to school age children and,**

**That S.E.A.C copy this letter to other S.E.A.C.’s, CASPLO and Speech Language providers for their support.**

**CARRIED**

**4. Matters Arising**

- Update Wish List

Superintendent Schaffer gave out a report with updated information as of January 2008 and discussion followed.

**5. Speaker – Odette Bartnicki - Recommendations for Bill 212**

Chair Danielli introduced and welcomed Odette Bartnicki and Jacki Oxley, who will be showing a power point presentation on Bill 212.

*B. Elgie (Alt. ABC) joined the meeting during power point presentation.*

J. Oxley distributed five documents to SEAC members. They were H.O.P.E.S, Preventing Bullying, HDSB Operational Policies/Procedures on Bullying Prevention and Intervention, Progressive Discipline and School Safety, and Summary of Changes to the Safe Schools Legislation. Discussion followed.

D. Danielli asked that O. Bartnicki send a copy of the power point to L. Dwyer to forward, via e-mail, to all SEAC members.

D. Danielli thanked O. Bartnicki and J. Oxley for presenting tonight. She also thanked P. Lack and S. Budworth for attending, as HDSB SEAC reps, the Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> session on Bill 212.

**6. Superintendent's Report**

K. Schaffer handed out her written report on Provincial Symposium 2008, Ministry staffing changes and Professional development for EAs. She highlighted some information and discussion followed.

K. Schaffer handed out a report passed by Board Trustees on December 19, 2007 on Special Education New Funding Recommendations. Discussion followed.

E. Whitehouse would have liked more discussion on the funding recommendations. She would like more information on learning disabilities. She would also like to recommend that an itinerant EA be hired to support the Developmental and Physically Challenged team. She advised that the Special Education Plan references EA's on system teams, but this team is without an EA.

S. Levy-Abraham advised that a notice of motion on funding should have come to SEAC first, then presented to the trustees. She would recommend that additional itinerant teachers are needed to support students with learning disabilities.

A. Collard asked K. Schaffer if SEAC would be able to get a copy of the new Ministry document *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting: Improving Student Learning*, which was shared with the members. K. Schaffer will provide either an electronic copy or photocopy.

*Trustee Dilly left the meeting at 9:10 p.m.*

L. Clark asked if there is some way SEAC could improve communication with the Board.

D. Danielli would like to defer this question to the working group and they can get back to SEAC with ideas.

## **7. Working Group Report**

D. Danielli asked S. Levy-Abraham for any updates.

S. Levy-Abraham advised that she had none, as the group has not met again.

D. Danielli recommended that a “Working Group” meeting should be set up soon.

## **8. Chair’s Report**

Nothing to report.

D. Danielli noted that SEAC members had a nice potluck dinner before the meeting tonight that was enjoyed very much. Thanks to L. Dwyer for arranging.

## **9. Association Reports**

E. Whitehouse noted that on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008, the Halton Down Syndrome Assoc. will be holding a meeting with a speaker on “More Than a Mom”. There are only 30 seats available for parents of Down Syndrome children.

## **10. Trustee Reports**

D. Vrooman questioned E. Whitehouse’s motion on who would pen that letter. Need to have Chair’s name on it and perhaps, the Board’s Chair. When should this be done by?

E. Whitehouse said that a rough draft should be brought to the next SEAC meeting.

C. Faria felt SEAC and Trustees should sign it.

D. Danielli mentioned that Trustees have begun work on the transportation policy and will be meeting tomorrow for bylaw reviews. OPSPA Symposium is happening later this month.

## **11. Correspondence**

None

## **12. Discussion/Question Period**

E. Whitehouse would like to request an in-service on “Friendly Language” for principals.

S. Levy-Abraham questioned K. Schaffer on the October report that some numbers look incorrect on the type of self-contained placement.

K. Schaffer replied that staff who work with the IEP engine have tried to pull out individual names of students who are not identified but have IEP’s. This information needs to be verified.

### ***Motion to extend meeting to 9:45***

S. Budworth/ J. Bevers

**#05-08**

### **CARRIED**

S. Budworth wanted to say how proud she was that HDSB sent SEAC reps to the November 16<sup>th</sup> session on Bill 212. Out of 42 school boards, we were the only school board who had SEAC reps present. She also wanted to note the difference between “disability” which is prohibitive grounds for discrimination covered under the Ontario Human Rights Code and “exceptionality” which is a term used in the Education Act. The Ontario Human Rights Code is primacy legislation, meaning that other legislation must comply with it, if there is a conflict, the OHRC trumps. The OHRC guarantees citizens no discrimination or harassment based on several grounds, of which disability is one. Disabilities are not limited to exceptionalities and could include asthma, environmental allergies, psychiatric conditions, and addictions. An exceptionality not considered a disability would be giftedness. As a school board, we should not be so focused on “exceptionalities” that we forget to accommodate disabilities. We have a “duty to accommodate” under the OHRC and not recognizing this, puts our board and students at risk.

J. Bevers added that the label “Social Emotional” instead of “Behaviour” is something she has worked toward for years and she supports this.

E. Whitehouse felt that if you want something changed at the Ministry, you need to write a letter.

K. Schaffer advised that the current thinking at Ministry does not support an increase in the current list of exceptionalities.

S. Levy-Abraham noted that the Education Act lays out provisions for appeal for parents.

## **13. Current Successes**

D. Danielli advised that the Board of Directors were invited to EA union presentation on Working Together Beyond This Room. It was very enjoyable.

**14. Next Agenda**

E. Whitehouse's motions discussed under matters arising.

S. Budworth would like to know ways SEAC can give advice to the board.

D. Danielli proposed that the working group look into this and come back with a synopsis.

A. Collard noted next month is the election of a new chair and vice-chair and she advised that she would not be running again.

D. Danielli asked what would SEAC like her to report to Trustees.

A. Collard asked that D. Danielli advise the Board that SEAC will be writing a letter to the Ministry, notifying them of their concerns regarding the provision of speech and language services in Ontario.

D. Danielli noted that this will be her last meeting as Chair and thanked SEAC members very much, adding that it has been an honour to chair the SEAC meetings for the past year.

D. Vrooman advised that at the February meeting some may decide, on that evening, to run and to put the name forward, then it would be voted on.

D. Danielli advised that potential candidates would need a nominee, a second, and that someone would be asked to speak to the nomination.

**Adjournment**

P. Lack/ L. Clark

**#06-08**

**“THAT the meeting adjourn.”**

**CARRIED**

Time: 9:45 p.m.

Recorded by: Lynnette Dwyer

Please note that the meeting did not voice record, as there was a problem with the speakers.