

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

Present: Amy Collard (Member at Large) (Chair); Paulyne Lack (Tourette Syndrome Assoc.); Dianna Bower (Halton Down Syndrome); Karen Poole-Lawrence (Alt. Easter Seals Society); Jennifer Hlusko (Trustee); Don Vrooman, (Alt. Trustee); Lynn Clark (Easter Seal Society); Anita Phillips (Alt. ABC); Greg Allen (ABC); Kathryn Bateman-Olmstead (Alt. Trustee)

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

Regrets: Amy McKenzie (Halton Council of Home and School Associations) (Vice Chair); Julie Armstrong (HDEAA); Jacqueline Bevers (Member at Large); Donna Danielli (Trustee)

Absent: Leslie Howchin (Community Living); Janet Barton (Alt. Community Living); Patricia Molnar (PSSP)

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

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

A. Collard called the meeting to order at 7:05.

A. Collard welcomed the gallery members from Special Education Resource Course.

D. Vrooman sat in as vice chair for the evening.

#### *1.2 Approval of Agenda*

J. Hlusko/D. Bower

**#09-10**

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

**CARRIED**

J. Hlusko reminded SEAC members that trustees are seeking input from SEAC regarding the Director search. Members should email or telephone the trustee they feel most comfortable with to have their input included in the data Odgers Berndtson is collecting.

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

#### *2.1 Collaborative Problem Solving- Jo Anne Trigg and Doug Bothwell*

J. Trigg and D. Bothwell explained the meaning of Collaborative Problem Solving and how it is being applied in Halton. They explained how behaviour problems can stem from inconsistency in parenting. CPS philosophy is contrary to the idea that parents and teachers always tell kids what to do.

Conventional wisdom goes by the belief that children will do well if they want to, but CPS focuses on the fact that children will do well if they can. CPS challenges traditional wisdom and presents itself as a real paradigm shift. Maladaptive behaviour is like a learning disability and there is a need to understand what the underlying skill/cognitive deficits are in order to help.

Through assessment, a student profile is developed to understand where their skill weaknesses lie. It is important for adults to engage in discussion with children and get their perspective, and then work together to solve the problem. Research shows that CPS does produce good results.

CPS has been implemented in 30 schools in Halton so far and is reflected in the Board Improvement Plan.

D. Bower commented that this is really important and it enables students to learn how to self advocate.

K. Bateman-Olmstead inquired how staff changes could affect CPS in schools, seeing that a steady relationship between the adults and children are important to the success of CPS.

D. Bothwell replied that having a whole school approach can help with this. The effect can trickle down. However, turn over is problematic with no easy solution.

D. Bower asked how you engage in CPS with students who don't have the capability of having an in depth conversation. Many students with special education needs fall into this category.

D. Bothwell replied that there is no short solution. Teachers need training to use other techniques to communicate. In cases like this there would be a need to use a variety of communication tools.

Information and videos relating to Collaborative Problem Solving can be found at [www.thinkkids.org](http://www.thinkkids.org)

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

None

### **Agenda Item 4 - Action**

#### **4.1 Approval of the Minutes**

There will be a change under the Trustee report section.

D. Bower/ G. Allen

**#10-10**

**“THAT the minutes of the February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 meeting be approved as amended”**

**CARRIED**

## 4.2 Order Paper

### 4.2.1 Special Education Plan and Budget Report

A. Collard mentioned that they have not heard back from S. Parfeniuk yet on this matter, but he will be invited to the next meeting for discussion.

### 4.2.2 Protocol Committee Report

The committee is meeting again Friday. There will be an update for next meeting

### 4.2.3 Communication Committee Report

The committee is meeting again Friday. There will be an update for next meeting

### 4.2.4 Accessibility Committee Report

The meeting was cancelled. There will be an update after the next meeting.

### 4.2.5 Update on All-Day program for 4 and 5 year olds

D. Boag commented that there are still many questions around this issue.

An advertisement went out for the position of Manager of ECE. It is a significant role and somebody has been hired for that position.

The Board is working on job positions and descriptions for ECE.

D. Boag mentioned that the program does fall under the Education Act, including all implications around special needs. There has been discussion around resources for the classes in the mornings and after school programs. There is still talk about EA support, etc. They are still looking at the budget. There is funding from the Ministry for this, but there are some funding questions surrounding the before and after school component, along with special needs.

## **Agenda Item 5 – Communication to SEAC and Current Successes**

### 5.1 Superintendent's Report

The data surrounding suspension of exceptional students is complex. It does show a gradual decrease over the years. This issue is still being looked at.

D. Boag will send SEAC information on the EA allocation process and the criteria that are being looked at for this.

The department is looking at annual reviews and the building of self contained classes. There is also a change this year to move the PLC class from Emily Carr to Pilgrim Wood, so it will be with the ELDC class. There has not been any formal communication on this to parents yet.

D. Boag noted that feedback from the Spec Ed heads focus groups session was shared in hardcopy tonight to SEAC.

D. Boag mentioned that the feedback from SEAC regarding primary gifted screening has been taken into consideration and the board is looking at a new model for the primary years. Screening will be initiated in primary by teacher or parent nomination. Criteria for nomination will be based on characteristics of the gifted learner (student profile) and not on academic marks, EQAO results, etc.... The process would involve having the teacher and the parents complete a checklist of criteria, then the student would be discussed at SRT and if there is agreement that the student is a gifted candidate, formal testing would be completed.

The board is considering running a pilot gifted class in September. There would be one pilot class in one community and it would be monitored over the year. The class would be evaluated and further plans made from there.

A. Collard shared some concerns regarding having the primary class start in lower grades as opposed to grade four. She said the program should be piloted with grade 4 students, and then have it move down to lower grades.

D. Bower asked if the screening would be in one community or board wide, also what would happen if more than 25 students were qualified for the class. She wondered if a second class would open in this case.

D. Boag replied that the assessment would be in one community, and they haven't decided which one yet. They would monitor if there should be more than one class. If the response is good then there could potentially be 2 pilot classes.

Discussion followed around which grade would be best to introduce the early gifted screening.

A few SEAC members agreed that grade 4 students are needier than lower grades. It is logical for the program to expand from 5-8 down to grade 4 through 1 and not the other way around. But they would like to see a program end up in lower grades eventually. Or perhaps the pilot program could start with grades 3 and 4.

D. Boag thanked SEAC for their feedback and said it would be taken into consideration.

D. Bower recommended that the Parent Location Form include a line saying that "An additional SRT Meeting may be required following class visit in order for parents to confirm their agreement of the self-contained placement prior to going to IPRC".

D. Bower also asked what the timeframe was from the initial location forms being filled out, to the class visits, to IPRC to determine the number of classes required for the fall. This would also determine the number of EAs required.

D. Boag mentioned that they are looking at SRT recommendations and numbers of classes, and there should be a decision in the next few weeks about the number of classes required. He also noted that the EA allocation process is being looked at carefully. Schools request EA's according to different criteria. All of this information is collected and considered when allocating EAs.

D. Bower asked how the information about the transition to high school information nights was provided. D. Boag said he would find out.

5.2 School Board Communications to Parents re: Special Needs Students

None

5.3 Chairs Report & Correspondence

The next Spec Ed plan and budget review meeting is on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. There will be information from S. Parfeniuk available at this meeting.

5.4 Association Reports

D. Bower provided an association report from HDSA:

“On behalf of our Provincial Association, I was one of two representatives who attended the stakeholder consultation session on the school health support services with Deloitte, the company hired to do the review on February 16, 2010. Representatives from the three ministries were there for the first part of the session which reviewed the consultation process itself.

The second part of the consultation was responding to the guiding questions provided in the invitation to participate: access and quality of service, program delivery, research evidence and best practice.

We will provide SEAC with a copy of our input document together with recommendations once they have been formalized.”

5.5 Trustee Reports

D. Vrooman gave an update on what is on the upcoming agenda:

- Gifted program update.
- Budget surrounding one time items rather than ongoing expenses. One of those items is wireless infrastructure to schools. Hope to have this for next fall.
- Naming 3 schools tomorrow.
- Approving some new or returning members to SEAC

**Agenda Item 6 – Questions from the Public**

None

**Agenda Item 7 – SEAC Discussion/Question Period**

D. Bower mentioned that she attended the School Programs information night and said the information was very helpful. She mentioned that Student Services and School Programs working together are vital to support students. She mentioned the Pathways presentation was very interesting and that they were piloting the contextualized learning in Grades 3 and 5 this Fall. D. Bower recommended that SEAC support D. Lewis coming to SEAC.

A Collard mentioned that Dave Lewis and Christine German will be coming to present to SEAC in June.

N. Scott will do a Bullying and Exceptional Students presentation in May

D. Bower mentioned that she had forwarded information on bullying of students with disabilities and special education needs and that she had the “Everyone Counts” program for teaching acceptance and inclusion with her for anyone to review.

D. Bower represented SEAC for the Kindergarten Information Night and mentioned that there was a pretty good turnout and it had gone well.

**Agenda Item 8**

8.1 Review of Additions to Order Paper

Order paper will remain the same.

8.3 Motion to Adjourn

D. Bower/P. Lack

**#11-10**

**“THAT the meeting adjourn.”**

**CARRIED**

Time: 9:00