

## Minutes of the meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee held in the Boardroom, J.W. Singleton Centre, Burlington, Ontario, on May 4, 2010.

Present: Amy Collard (Member at Large) (Chair); Amy McKenzie (Halton Council of Home and School Associations) (Vice Chair); Paulyne Lack (Tourette Syndrome Association); Dianna Bower (Halton Down Syndrome); Jennifer Hlusko (Trustee); Don Vrooman (Alt. Trustee); Lynn Clark (Easter Seal Society); Anita Phillips (Alt. ABC); Greg Allen (ABC); Craig Newman (VIEWS); Karen Poole-Lawrence (Alt. Easter Seals Society); Lisa Reid (Alt. Halton Down Syndrome); Veerle Ryckewaert (Autism Ontario); Patrice Shennette (Alt. Autism Ontario); Vicki DeMone (Alt. Tourette Syndrome Association); Janet Barton (Community Living) (VIA Phone)

Resource Staff: David Boag, Superintendent of Education; Pamela Cooley, Secretary; Nigel Scott (HSPA); Julie Armstrong (HEPA)

Regrets: Kathryn Bateman-Olmstead (Alt. Trustee); Donna Danielli (Trustee)

Absent: Leslie Howchin (Alt. Community Living); Lisa Griffiths (PSSP); Lynne Gurzi (HDEAA); Patricia Molnar (PSSP);

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

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

A. Collard called the meeting to order at 7:04. She welcomed some new members to SEAC; Veerle Ryckewaert and Patrice Shennette from Autism Ontario, Vicki DeMone from Tourette Syndrome Association and Lisa Reid from Halton Down Syndrome Association.

#### *1.2 Approval of Agenda*

The Agenda will be amended to include the notices of motion brought forward last month.

P. Lack/D. Bower

**#19-10**

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

**CARRIED**

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

#### *2.1 Alternative Curriculum- Christy Peterson and Teri Caldwell-McCann*

Alternative program is developed by teachers to help students acquire knowledge and skills based on individual students' needs that are not represented in the Ontario Curriculum. Alternate program areas may include functional academics, personal life management, functional life skills, social skills, communication, leisure and recreation, transition to work, etc.

The two main Alternative Program resources are the Carolina Curriculum and AFAC: A Functional Assessment and Curriculum.

Some background information on these two resources was provided.

There is HDSB system-wide distribution and annual training/in-service of AFAC and Carolina Curriculum. System itinerant teams support school-based staff in implementation. Training usually takes place in the fall.

## 2.2 Bullying-Nigel Scott

Bullying is any form of aggressive behaviour that is intentional, repeated, and involves an imbalance of power or strength.

Some points about Bullying include:

- 30% of all kids between grades 6 and 10 are involved in moderate to frequent bullying.
- CyberBullying (Using the internet to make comments) has taken off in the last 3 to 4 years.
- Kids with disabilities are twice as likely to be bullied as kids who do not have disabilities.
- Kids with ADHD are more likely to be bullied and are more likely to bully others.
- Bullying can have a major impact on academics and can even be the difference in passing and failing.
- In Halton there is continued work with bystander training, such as 'Tribes' and 'Beyond the Hurt'.
- A 2 grade difference works best in terms of a mentorship model (e.g. A grade 11 mentoring a grade 9 student).
- There will be an Anti-Bullying Resource Guide ready by the end of this year.
- Safe School Action Teams generate better communication and more community wide involvement.

Schools use a progressive discipline model when it comes to consequences for bullies. There would be a start with counselling and then that would lead to an in-school suspension or formal suspension. Research shows that outright punishment for bullies doesn't work. It can be more useful to reach out.

Halton is working on teaching Cultural Proficiency and working it into early grades, which can help with bullying by making sure that students are aware of diversity within Halton schools.

Discussion followed on Bully and Victim interaction.

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

D. Bower brought forward a notice of Motion to substitute for the Motion brought forward last month that was deferred. This motion will be discussed in the order paper section.

**Agenda Item 4 - Action**

4.1 Approval of the Minutes

A. Collard brought forward 2 amendments.

D. Bower/ C. Newman

**#20-10**

**“THAT the minutes of the April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010 meeting be approved as amended.”**

**CARRIED**

4.2 Order Paper

4.2.1 Special Education Budget Review- Steven Parfeniuk

S. Parfeniuk handed out a chart that had Board estimates on the Special Education Budget. He also gave an overview of staffing in Special Education across the Board and how that affects the budget.

He noted that there will be a growth of 2000 students to Halton, which will also affect the budget for next year. He also mentioned that the high needs amount has been frozen for a few years.

S. Parfeniuk shared some Spec Ed Investments that are being considered by Admin Council. He gave an overview of the budget process and explained the 5 stages of budget building.

S. Parfeniuk mentioned that there will be four meetings across Halton regarding budget planning. This information is on website. He mentioned that it would be good if some SEAC members could attend.

Some discussion took place on staffing in Special Education.

Admin council's next meeting is Monday so any information or input should be sent to D. Boag or S. Parfeniuk before then.

A. Collard asked for any additional input from SEAC on the Recommendations document that was sent out.

D. Bower provided some input under the IEP section, the Pathways section and on the Communications and Transitions section.

D. Vrooman inquired about the change to SEA grants.

D. Boag explained how Assistive Technology will not be claims based and there could be more flexibility in spending, such as using some of it for SMART boards.

Some discussion took place regarding the expectations of SEAC from presenting the recommendations document to the Trustees. It was noted that the items will likely need to be prioritized because the Trustees will not be able to approve it at the meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> taking into account that it would require a lot of consideration and would dramatically change the budget.

J. Hlusko explained the process for approval by the Trustees.

Discussion followed on the expectations of this document.

A. Collard noted that the expectation is that they would be accepted in principal and discussed as a possibility as much as the budget would allow.

Discussion took place regarding the Spec Ed Plan. Specifically, when the changes to this would take place and also when it would be able to be approved.

D. Boag commented on the Spec Ed Plan and noted that there is information on this listed in the Superintendent's Report. He suggested updating the Spec Ed Plan and then taking it to the Board. He will send out a chart soon indicating the suggested changes to the plan. There can be more dialogue at the June meeting.

Discussion followed on the timing of the Spec Ed plan, budget finalization timing and the prioritization of the recommendations in the document.

J. Hlusko commented that if they are not prioritized and people do not speak to them then it is likely that nothing will happen.

A. Collard mentioned that staff may be in a better position to be able to prioritize the recommendations.

Discussion took place on having a second meeting in June to be able to finalize the Spec Ed plan.

D. Boag commented that the plan should be updated with the information that is known and then SEAC should tentatively block in a second meeting in June to add the budget amendments.

A. Collard moved to accept the document to be presented at the meeting on June 2<sup>nd</sup> to the Trustees.

A. Collard/C. Newman

#21-10

**“THAT the document with the recommendations from SEAC regarding the Special Education Plan and Budget Review be accepted.”**

**CARRIED**

4.2.2 Protocol Committee Report

A. Collard suggested cancelling the May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.

A. McKenzie spoke to the protocol report regarding the voice recording of SEAC and making meetings more accessible by having some meetings in other locations.

D. Vrooman noted he was against ceasing the video voice recording. There is potential for having meetings in other facilities where they can be video voice recorded. It is better to push for more communication rather than less.

J.Hlusko also objected.

D. Bower asked if there would be any impact to having one meeting in the north and just not recording that meeting.

A. McKenzie said if there could be an exception to those nights it would be great.

A. Collard suggested meeting on the second Tuesday in September instead of the first day of school.

A. Collard made a motion to extend the meeting.

D. Bower/L. Clark

#22-10

**“That the meeting be extended.”**

**CARRIED**

After Discussion, it was decided to try and put the October meeting in the far north.

#### 4.2.3 Communication Committee Report

Discussion took place regarding an IEP information night taking place in the early fall.

P. Lack asked if there would be one meeting in one area or one in each of the four areas.

D. Boag mentioned there would be a need for SEAC’s support at this event. He suggested doing one meeting in late September for next year and then consider the response when planning for the following year. If there is lots of interest, we may wish to do more than one evening.

A. Mckenzie noted that they are still looking for input on the website.

#### 4.2.4 Accessibility Committee Report

J. Barton noted there was a great turnout at the Halton Accessibility Showcase.

A. Collard congratulated J. Barton and C. Peterson on all their hard work on the Showcase.

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

S. Roszell gave an update on the all day Kindergarten programming:

- The Ontario Legislature passed the Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010 on April 27<sup>th</sup>. The legislation included a number of amendments, such as clarifying the roles of teachers and early childhood educators in full-day early learning classrooms. The legislation transferred childcare policy and program responsibilities to the Ministry of Education from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.
- Year Two sites have been submitted to the Ministry of Education for approval in late May. The proposed sites, if approved, are: Robert Little, Gardiner, Ryerson, Brant Hills and Sheridan.
- The availability of program depends on demand at each site. Therefore, the program may not be available if there is too little demand at a school.
- There will be parent information sessions on the Early Learning Program at the following sites:
  - Milton: May 11<sup>th</sup>, 7-8 pm at Escarpment View
  - Burlington: May 12<sup>th</sup>, 7-8 pm at Mohawk Gardens
  - Oakville: May 13<sup>th</sup>, 7-9 pm at Abbey Lane

4.2.6 SEAC Awards Committee Update

Nominations closed Friday. SEAC members will be needed to help distribute the awards.

4.2.7 Motions

One notice of Motion from last month is being withdrawn and one notice of motion is being deferred until June.

The motion that was put forward last month regarding the identification of “Behaviour” will be substituted this month with the following motion:

D. Bower/J. Barton

#23-10

**“THAT The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Halton District School Board direct the Chair of SEAC to send the attached letter on behalf of SEAC to the Ontario Minister of Education with a request to review and update the categories of exceptionalities to appropriately reflect the special education needs of students currently identified “Behaviour”.**

**RATIONALE:**

1. The current categories of exceptionalities developed by the Ministry of Education for the purposes of formal identification include “Behaviour” which is described as “behaviour problems...marked degree”.
2. Legislation specifies that students 16 years of age and older must be consulted about IEPs and have the right to attend IPRC Meetings which may include the above language.

3. The term “behaviour” has a negative connotation that may stigmatize the student and does not adequately reflect those students with social emotional or neurological issues.

**CARRIED**

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

5.1 Superintendent’s Report

Some discussion took place on the Gifted Screening process. D. Boag will provide an update on this topic for the next meeting.

5.2 School Board Communications to Parents re: Special Needs Students

None

5.3 Chairs Report & Correspondence

A. Collard did send a thank you letter to J. Bevers on behalf of SEAC for all her years as a representative.

D. Bower and A. Collard both participated in the Deloitte SHSS review and said it was productive.

5.4 Association Reports

D. Bower provided an Association Report for Halton Down Syndrome Association:

**NEW INITIATIVES:**

The Learning & Resource Centre is still involved in its initial 8 week pilot and will be bringing a long term plan to our AGM on May 28<sup>th</sup>.

**OTHER INFORMATION:**

Our Provincial Association, as part of PAAC on SEAC, is working on the guide for SEACs on best practice for Boards on SEAC membership, training, etc.

5.5 Trustee Reports

D. Vrooman gave an update on what the trustees are working on right now:

- Banking Resolutions
- Theme school policy
- Projected Enrolments
- Long Term Accommodation Plan

He noted they are still working hard on finding a new director. Interviews will take place in May. They hope to have a new director by the end of June.

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

None

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

A. Collard reminded SEAC that there will be a Pot Luck dinner before the next meeting.

D. Bower encouraged SEAC reps to attend the Special Athletes Track Meet. She asked if there are plans to open up the track meet to different areas around Halton.

D. Boag will bring information back next month on this topic.

**Agenda Item 8**

**8.1 Review of Additions to Order Paper**

Add:

- Early Identification of students of learning disabilities
- Changes to the Special Education plan for June 1<sup>st</sup> first.
- Information about the Track Meet for Special Athletes being held at different venues

**8.3 Motion to Adjourn**

J. Barton/P. Lack

**#24-10**

**“THAT the meeting adjourn.”**

**CARRIED**

Time: 10:17

# SEAC Superintendent's Report

May 4, 2010

**Accessibility Showcase-** this event occurred on April 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Halton Region Building and was a great success. There were numerous community agencies and services there and a great turn out to the event. SEAC had a table and display board set up there. Christy Peterson from Student Services and Janet Barton were key organizers and did a fantastic job pulling such a huge event together. It was a great success!

**Budget/Special Education Priorities Update** – The Student Services Department had an opportunity to look over the SEAC priorities. Although there were lots of suggestions to tweak the SEAC document, you will notice all kinds of similarities in what SEAC has identified as a priority and what the Student Services department also feels is a priority (see the Student Services Priorities document attached). This means we are hearing, seeing and valuing the same kinds of things and have a common understanding of the areas that need to be addressed in the system to improve services for our students.

**SEA (Special Equipment Amount) Budget** – Each board has received SEA money from the Ministry based on the number of claims submitted by boards for specialized equipment for students. This includes equipment to support physical and health related needs as well as assistive technology (primarily laptop computers and assistive software). Over the past few years, boards have been required to pay for the first \$800 of a student's claim and the Ministry pays for the rest. Typically our claims have averaged in the neighbourhood of about \$3000 to \$3500 per claim. For next year, the government will be providing boards with a specific per student amount and boards will need to budget and plan to stay within that allocation. This will have the advantage of reducing a lot of paperwork connected to the claims process. We are currently trying to determine how the SEA amount for next year compares with this year's amount and any potential impact to students or programs.

**Gifted Parent Information Evening** – this information evening was held on April 8<sup>th</sup> at Milton District High School for all gifted students/families entering grades 5 – 8 next year. Teri Caldwell-McCann did an excellent job organizing this information evening. There was a huge turn out and ABC was there with their display and took part in the presentation as well. The evening was a wonderful success.

**Gifted Pilot Implementation** – I met with Burlington Administrators and SERTS to present the SK/Gr 1 screening process for gifted identification (attached). They are busy in their schools now working with families through the process. There has been good response in schools in nominating students for consideration. One school I spoke to had 15 nominations and were trying to sort out the SRT process and communication, etc.... We will continue to monitor progress and support schools this spring through the process.

**New Professional Services Supervisor Position** – During the mid year Mini-budget process, this additional position was approved. The ad for this position will be going out shortly and will be posted internally and externally. This position supervises our

professional services staff (social workers, CYCs, speech and language pathologists and psychological consultants). They coordinate services to schools around significant complex cases involving high need students with ASD, behaviour or mental health concerns and they also coordinate and communicate with community service agencies for students who require additional intervention outside what is normally offered by the school board.

**Special Education Plan** – there has been talk for much of this year that the Special Education Plan would become part of the Board Improvement Plan. The most recent Ministry Memo dated April 19<sup>th</sup> was shared with SEAC. It provided a brief update including the following:

- This year is a transitional year for Special Education Plans
- Boards are required to have and share their plan for provision of Special Education programs and services
- There will be continued work to align Special Education planning with the Board Improvement Plan
- Boards do not need to submit their Special Education Plans
- Boards will submit a checklist of the components contained in their plan

**Special Education Website Information** - has been updated with SEAC Contact information. The SEAC content should probably be reviewed and the Communications Committee has identified this as a future task. The Ministry of Education Special Education website was updated in late March and provides very parent friendly information on a variety of topics related to special education. This information will be made available to parents.

**SEAC Association Flyers** – just a reminder that Janet Barton has agreed to have some of her Community Living students package up your SEAC pamphlets so that we can distribute them to schools in the fall. We were thinking that if you could provide about 1000 flyers, we would be able to put about 10 or so into each school. Thanks Janet for taking on this task. It will be great to start the year having each school well stocked with up to date information about SEAC associations.

**Talking Out Loud** – Mental Health Week starts May 3<sup>rd</sup> and we invite you to join us for “Talking Out Loud”, a presentation on de-stigmatizing mental health. Please see the attached flyer.