

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 November 11, 2008.

Present: Donna Danielli (Trustee); Jennifer Hlusko (Trustee); Don Vrooman, (Alt. Trustee); Amy Collard (Member at Large) (Chair); Lynn Clark (Easter Seal Society) (Vice Chair); Karen Poole-Lawrence (Alt. Easter Seals Society); Amy McKenzie (Halton Council of Home and School); Greg Allen (ABC); Bill Elgie (Alt. ABC); Janet Barton (Alt. Community Living); Christopher McGee (Halton Down Syndrome); Ellen Whitehouse (Alt. Halton Down Syndrome); Daryl Potter (Autism Ont.); Jacqueline Bevers (Member at Large); Paulyne Lack (Tourette's Syndrome Assoc.)

Resource Staff: Kathy Schaffer, Superintendent of Education; Pamela Cooley, Secretary; Julie Armstrong (HEPA); Michelle Joly (PSSP);

Regrets: Bruce Jones (Alt. Trustee) was in attendance at Audit Committee, scheduled at the same time.

Absent: Maggie Diltz (VOICE); Erin Walker (Autism Ont.); Lynne Gurzi (HDEAA); Mary Jane Farrish (HSPA); Leslie Howchin (Community Living); Lisa Griffiths (PSSP)

Agenda Item 1- Opening

1.1 Welcome and Call to Order

The chair Amy Collard called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

A. Collard welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially observers from Charles Sturt University. She did a reading for Remembrance Day and there was a minute of silence.

1.2 Approval of Agenda

J. Barton/ D. Vrooman

#36-08

“THAT the Agenda be approved.”

CARRIED

Agenda Item 2 - Presentations

2.1 Halton Council of Home and School Association – Amy McKenzie

A. Collard welcomed Maureen Smithers, President from HCHSA to do a presentation.

Maureen Smithers and A. McKenzie presented a Power Point presentation from the Halton Home and School Association. They explained that Halton Council of Home and School Associations serves not only its members but also the wider school parent community through newsletters, OFSHA

conferences and its website. The council would like to work further with SEAC reps to distribute information about their different community association's services and their events. They mentioned that some of their members need to know more about SEAC. HHSa wants to work closely with SEAC so they can make sure parents are getting all the information they need. They suggested that SEAC might consider putting together a DVD of information for parents. They also suggested online video clips as a possibility.

A Collard thanked Maureen and Amy for their presentation. She said DVD/online clips are a fantastic idea. She asked if anyone had any questions and there were none.

G. Allen came into the meeting at 7:15

Agenda Item 3

3.0 Call for Notices of Motion/Reports to the Board

None

Agenda Item 4 - Action

4.1 Approval of the Minutes

E. Whitehouse/D. Potter

#37-08

“THAT the Minutes of the October 7, 2008 meeting be approved with an amendment by E. Whitehouse on page 3. The sentence should read; to see the board using this program as a teaching tool.”

E. Whitehouse noted that the program is recommended for students that are hard of hearing, not deaf.

CARRIED

4.2 Matters Arising

None

4.3 Order Paper

K. Schaffer reviewed information presented at the Ontario Psychological Association (OPA) meeting in October. They provided a summary of key results and critical findings. Four copies were sent to the board. Members may borrow a hard copy and if the results are available through a weblink, she will forward the information.

K. Schaffer described the second OPA document called *Sharing Promising Practices*, which contained some effective assessment, practices and project summaries from various boards.

K. Schaffer would like to keep OPA on the order paper as she has requested additional results from the Halton 2008-09 project.

A discussion on recruiting new members for SEAC was held.

K. Schaffer reported that at the OPA meeting she connected with LDAO provincial staff about bringing in new members for SEAC. She asked if they had ideas about bringing LDAO back to table. They have received inquiries from parents. They are hoping to hold a community meeting in Halton and K. Schaffer indicated that SEAC would be happy to help have LDAO reps return to the table.

K. Schaffer checked legislation and reported that SEAC cannot exceed 12 associations. Currently SEAC is missing 4 association members. She noted that SEAC members had received an email from former VIEWS representative indicating that they hope to return to SEAC.

A. Collard received a fax from CADDAC (Centre for ADD/ADHD Advocacy Canada), requesting membership on SEAC. This process has to go through the Director and the trustees. One of the associations would have to be let go in order to let them on. A. Collard would be pleased to see them represented.

E. Whitehouse asked if they could apply to be a member at large. A. Collard replied that members at large cannot belong to an association.

K. Schaffer indicated that the final decision will be brought back to trustees. She said we should think about this issue, as we don't have anyone from Canadian Mental Health. There is a lack of an advocate in this area. If CADDAC could spill over into this area it could be considered. The Ontario Association of Families with Children with Communication Disorders also does not appear to have an active local association.

E. Whitehouse wants to add her request regarding the *Phoneme Touch and Say* program back onto the order paper.

It was noted that the program is not likely to be used by speech and language pathologists (SLP's). K. Schaffer noted that the SLP's indicated that this program is similar to a program called *Prompt*.

E. Whitehouse stated that the programs have limited similarity.

K. Schaffer would like to have another discussion and invite E. Whitehouse to join.

E. Whitehouse noted that a speech and language pathologist could target a child, or the program could be used in a classroom. The program has replaced *Jolly Phonics* in a Nova Scotia school

E. Whitehouse would like to volunteer to organize a workshop on *Phoneme Touch and Say* in Halton. K. Schaffer indicated that she would connect with the Early Years team to see if they would be interested in this program.

J. Bevers asked for additional information on the Early Years team.

K. Schaffer replied that Program Services deals with all curriculum pieces. Jol Grzeslo is the lead on Early Years and Ruth Peden, the Associate Director, is in charge of Program Services.

C. McGee requested information on possible implementation timelines.

K. Schaffer replied that there is no exact time frame for this type of initiative. She noted that the speech and language pathologists have not asked for a formal recommendation yet. K. Schaffer noted that there is a need to go back to them and ask about ideas regarding tools that Halton can use. From there they would plan forward if it became a SEAC priority. She said that generally not much gets implemented in less than a year.

C. McGee noted that he would like the process to go on.

D. Potter requested adding a regional seniority list for SERT's to the order paper.

4.4 New Business – Review of Special Education Plan Standards 4 & 5

D. Vrooman noted for the Charles Sturt students in the room that they might wonder about standards. He explained that they are part of the board Special Education Plan. He advised them to look on the board website.

A. Collard opened the floor for discussion on standard 4.

L. Clark noted that on pg. 23, 4th paragraph in the *prior to school entry* section, that parents are not listed as stakeholders.

A. Collard wants to add the word parent.

L. Clark wanted to know what *Teacher School Readiness Inventory* was. It is on the same page.

K. Schaffer said it is an assessment tool. She said she will bring it and share it with L.Clark. It is a quick overview of kids at risk due to weak expected school behaviours.

L. Clark noted the blocks on pg. 26 and asked what the timeline was.

K. Schaffer responded that it is very individualized. It is a cycle that goes around. In younger children it might be developmental and the process could be dragged out longer.

D. Vrooman asked if this should be recognized in the plan so that people with less experience can understand it better.

K. Schaffer said if there is a way to make it more clear for parents it is important.

L.Clark noted that she likes the description of a circle better than arrows on the page because it is easier to understand it visually.

D. Potter asked how compliance is achieved in the plan.

K. Schaffer explained that the legislation done in the 1980's made it mandatory for all children to have access to schools. From this, all boards had to put a plan in place. Since then, legislation has never been updated significantly. In 2000, standards were put in place that required comprehensive written descriptions of available programs and services. In 2003 the Ministry realized that the plans did not reflect forward planning. They have indicated that the plan to have target setting for special education

imbedded in the board improvement plan. This work has been on hold for 3 years in a row. This causes the plan to keep getting rolled over with just changes noted.

J. Bevers asked if SERT's make referrals for regional-based interventions.

K. Schaffer responded that SERT's support paperwork and that the school resource team does the referrals.

A. Collard opened the discussion for Standard 5

K. Schaffer alerted everyone to a change on pg. 29, *Composition of an IPRC Committee*. There has been a change this year for elementary. There are 3 school administrators instead of 2 school administrators and an area supervisor. She noted that the school-based psychological associate would be at every IPRC. She said that early reports indicate that the school administrators are doing very well.

L. Clark asked about pg. 30, the process before an IPRC meeting occurs. She questioned why is it different if parent initiates the IPRC.

K. Schaffer said that parents provide the documents for a parent-requested IPRC, because the school resource team does not have them in this case. Parents should send information to IPRC committee 10 days in advance.

B. Elgie asked about the meaning of the acronyms on pg.34, OHRC and CCC.

K Schaffer replied CCC is referring the Communication Community Class, and that OHRC stands for Ontario Human Rights Commission.

B. Elgie recommended an asterisk added with an explanation.

A. Collard said it should be in the glossary and that subsections be discussed in next meeting, Standard 9, Standard 7, and Standard 10, if there is time.

D. Potter wondered if a discussion could take place about changes to the plan so it is less intimidating. He made a suggestion of a snapshot of details for each section.

A. Collard liked the idea.

K. Schaffer agreed that parents would likely prefer a more user-friendly document. She said that the standards created an incredibly detailed document and that any suggestions are welcome.

J. Barton noted that this idea has been brought up in the past. There was discussion of an audio version about 7 years ago. She noted that it cannot be made too simple or else we lose what should be focusing on in the Plan

E. Whitehouse said she thinks the plan should stay where it is. We want teachers and administrators to reference it. She said the *Working Together* document should be reviewed as well.

Agenda Item 5 – Communication to SEAC and Current Successes

5.1 Superintendent's Report

K. Schaffer wondered if people went to the *Students First* conference. She noted the speakers were well received. The conference focused on differentiated instruction.

K. Schaffer explained there were some issues with the EQAO data. She explained that the totals on Oct. 31 were higher. The reason why Trillium doesn't have the correct totals is because there was no start date on the IEP's. This information needs to be filled in correctly in Trillium in order for it to pick up the correct dates.

K. Schaffer explained the meaning of SEA (Special Education Amount) claims.

K. Schaffer had a memo on Modernization of school board governance. Copies were available for the taking.

A. McKenzie said she would like an electronic copy.

5.2 School Board Communications to Parents re: Special Needs Students

None

5.3 Chairs Report & Correspondence

A. Collard noted that there will be a presentation on differentiated instruction in January. It will be tailored for a parent audience rather than teacher training. She asked for an Association to volunteer for February.

D. Potter (Autism Ontario) volunteered.

5.4 Association Reports

The cutbacks that CCAC is implementing in terms of speech language were brought into discussion.

K. Schaffer said she has not received anything in writing about what is happening and agreed that it is a concern. Speech and language concerns have been put forward.

K. Schaffer said she had to contract out to an agency because of problems finding people for the job and that not having the staff is making it difficult to meet student needs.

E. Whitehouse asked if other associations experienced this, and if the CCAC could be invited to come to a meeting to speak and explain changes.

D. Potter said their parents are experiencing this as well. If they would come speak it would be good if they were willing to do it.

K. Schaffer said she would forward the contact information to the chair.

E. Whitehouse asked to hear more about the pilot Occupational Therapy project occurring at Hawthorne Village.

K. Schaffer said they are bringing in an occupational therapist to provide teachers with techniques to address concerns with fine and gross motor control. It is intended to inform staff in the school of general awareness, instead of providing case-by-case treatment. They have requested another school that is smaller. Oakwood has been recommended.

5.5 Trustee Reports

D. Danielli said it is a very busy time. She listed a series of events that have taken place. She asked if there was anything she should report to the board meeting on the 19th.

A Collard replied that Wayne Joudrie should discuss the issue regarding the CADDAC, which would require removing one of the associations.

E. Whitehouse asked about a 4th area for appropriately staffing the growth in the north.

A. Collard said this should be discussed at the trustee table.

K. Schaffer discussed that a decision for principal has been made. Sue Roszell will be joining on January 1st. She said the addition of the principal will take some of the load off the coordinators. The issue of additional support staff will be considered in the spring.

Agenda Item 6 – Questions from the Public

K. Schaffer read 4 questions from the public and responded.

Agenda Item 7 – SEAC Discussion/Question Period

E. Whitehouse asked who would work with a student with a learning disability, who wanted to stay in regular class with withdrawal.

K. Schaffer said they should be moved to assistive technologies so that they can be as independent as possible. The SERT or the classroom teacher may continue to provide print instruction. Assistive technologies help students to keep up with their content subjects and often improve literacy levels. Individual training can be done with a SEA claim or they can go to the learning centre.

E. Whitehouse mentioned she would like to know more about Assistive Technologies and perhaps would like to see a presentation. A member of the public suggested contacting Bridges for a presentation.

A. Collard would like the contact for Bridges so they can come in and present.

P. Lack asked G. Allen about ABC providing a workshop for parents of grade 4 students to help them understand the IPRC process. She said Giselle Murdoch would know of this process.

A. Collard mentioned it is an excellent idea.

Agenda Item 8

8.1 Review of Additions to Order Paper

OPA

New members for SEAC

Add Phoneme Touch and Say

Add CCAC contact information

Add Communications with Bridges

Add SERT regional hire

8.3 Motion to Adjourn

G. Allen/ D. Danielli

#38-08

“THAT the meeting adjourn.”

CARRIED

Time: 9:35 p.m.

Recorded by: Pamela Cooley