

# 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 October 7, 2008.**

Present: Donna Danielli (Trustee); Bruce Jones (Alt. 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)

Resource Staff: Kathy Schaffer, Superintendent of Education; Lynnette Dwyer, Secretary; Julie Armstrong (HEPA);

Regrets: Leslie Howchin (Community Living); Paulyne Lack (Tourette's Syndrome Assoc.)

Absent: Maggie Diltz (VOICE); Erin Walker (Autism Ont.); Michelle Joly (PSSP); Lynne Gurzi (HDEAA); Mary Jane Farrish (HSPA)

There were no representatives for VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children or Tourette Syndrome Assoc. of Halton.

## **Agenda Item 1- Opening**

### *1.1 Welcome and Call to Order*

The chair Amy Collard called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

### *1.2 Selection of Interim Chair for SEAC*

**MOTION to nominate Amy Collard (Member at Large) as interim chair of SEAC.**

D. Danielli/J. Barton #31-08

**CARRIED**

**Move that the nominations be closed.**

J. Barton/C. McGee #32-08

**CARRIED**

Amy Collard moved to the chair position and proceeded with the meeting agenda.

1.3 Approval of Agenda

J. Barton/ D. Potter

#33-08

**“THAT the Agenda be approved with an amendment on Agenda Item 2 that Superintendent Yaw Obeng will be doing a presentation on the Parent Involvement Committee.”**

**CARRIED**

**Agenda Item 2 - Presentations**

Presentation on the Parent Involvement Committee - Yaw Obeng.

Y. Obeng, Superintendent for the North area in Halton (Milton), shared information on the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC). Pamphlets titled “Parent Involvement Committee Resource Guidelines September 2008” were handed out.

Y. Obeng extended an invitation to SEAC members asking for a representative of SEAC to sit on the Parent Involvement Committee. He also shared that PIC have put together a Parent Involvement Committee Conference taking place on Saturday, October 25, 2008 at White Oaks Secondary School from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Y. Obeng encouraged SEAC members to go on line and register to attend. There is no cost. Information flyers on the Conference were distributed and hard copies of the registration form were also available for anyone wanting to register tonight.

C. McGee wondered how information on this committee is getting out to the public.

Y. Obeng advised that they have advertised through hard copies to the principals, school councils, and parent groups. There has also been a media release through all the local papers in Halton.

J. Barton wondered if this conference is specific to Halton DSB, or was it planned in conjunction with other boards.

Y. Obeng replied that it was organized by HDSB with an invitation to HCDSB to participate.

A. Collard thanked Y. Obeng for the information he provided SEAC this evening.

**Agenda Item 3**

3.1 Call for Notices of Motion/Reports to the Board

None

**Agenda Item 4 - Action**

4.1 Approval of the Minutes

B. Elgie/J. Bevers

#34-08

**“THAT the Minutes of the September 9, 2008 meeting be approved.**

**CARRIED**

4.2 Matters Arising

K. Schaffer provided members with copies of the 2008-09 Operational Plans and highlighted the special education targets for students with learning disabilities. K. Schaffer distributed EQAO Results for Students with Learning Disabilities, including graphs of Grade 6 results for the last two years.

K. Schaffer advised that if anyone had questions at any time, to please e-mail her.

4.3 Order Paper

Motion #04-08, Letter re: Speech/Language to be finalized.

E. Whitehouse, Alternate representative for Halton Down Syndrome Association sent all members an e-mail on Monday, October 6<sup>th</sup> regarding this motion. She went on to explain that Speech and Language is a huge issue for Down Syndrome Association. She recently attended a workshop for Phoneme Touch and Say, a program she would like to see this board using this program as a teaching tool. It helps students remember sounds by touch and feel. She noted that in Britain they don't teach the alphabet first, they teach sounds first. This program also has a whole spelling program. For children who are hard of hearing, you can show them sounds because of the visual clues. She asked SEAC if we could look into having this program implemented in our schools. She suggested that SLPs, teachers could have a look at it and ask their opinion on it. She wondered if there could be a workshop on this program and how it could get implemented in our board. She feels that if a workshop can happen this year, we could make a decision regarding implementation. She asked for Superintendent Schaffer's comments and ideas on this program.

K. Schaffer replied that she appreciated her writing about this with detail. She will take the information back to the Student Services department and explore options for investigating this program.

D. Danielli finds this program to be very interesting and is pleased that Kathy is going to look into this. She would like to know what the costs would be.

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

### **5.1 Superintendent's Report**

K. Schaffer discussed her report on New Individual Education Plan (IEP) Samples, Special Education Professional Development Day, Premier Assistive Technology for Home, Premier Assistive Technology for Schools, Moving Differentiation Forward in Halton, Workplace Violence Committee, Ontario Psychological Assoc. (OPA) meeting and announcement of our SEAC Secretary leaving for a new position in the board.

Discussion and questions followed.

E. Whitehouse wondered if anything could be shared on the OPA student assessment and if there are promising practices around computer programs for students with ADD.

K. Schaffer answered that the purpose of the OPA project focused on assessment practices, waiting lists, and improving the connection of assessments to instruction. She indicated that she would share any information distributed at this meeting.

### **5.2 School Board Communications to Parents re: Special Needs Students**

None

### **5.3 Chairs Report & Correspondence**

A. Collard wanted to remind everyone of the Parent Involvement Committee Conference. She advised that there would be a tote bag for first 150 attendees.

D. Danielli expressed concern on the number of resignations from SEAC in the last few months and would like K. Schaffer to advise on what we will need to do to recruit new representatives on SEAC.

J. Hlusko noted that this is a problem in other SEACs. She proposed that the current need for advocacy might not be as urgent in Ontario as it had been in the past.

E. Whitehouse wondered if the board could invite new Associations to represent on SEAC.

J. Barton noted that families with special needs children are now faced with long waits for supports and services. She feels there is a big issue in Halton right now and a need for more representation.

A. Collard would like to see each Association on SEAC do a small presentation to give information on what their Association is all about. She asked for volunteers to do a presentation at the November 11<sup>th</sup> SEAC meeting.

A. McKenzie (Halton Home and School Assoc.) volunteered to do a presentation in November and C. McGee (Halton Down Syndrome Assoc.) will do a presentation in December.

D. Danielli wondered if SEAC could take some time at each meeting to discuss the Special Education Plan instead of waiting until May or June.

A. Collard agreed that would be a good idea.

#### 5.4 Association Reports

D. Potter requested clarification on the type of content appropriate for an association report.

A. Collard advised that Representatives could announce any successes, upcoming events etc. that is happening with their Association.

#### 5.5 Trustee Reports

D. Danielli noted that it is still a very busy time for trustees as all employee groups are participating in collective agreement negotiations. There is a lot going on in all areas of the board. She noted that she attended the National Forum of Human Rights Conference for students with disabilities. The focus was on inclusion instead of integration. She would like to know if there is anything SEAC would like her to take to board.

A. Collard asked that she speak to the board about the Phoneme Touch and Say program and how SEAC is very interested finding out more about this program.

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

One question regarded the concern that students with learning disabilities are not represented at the table.

E. Whitehouse would like to see the Learning Disabilities Association put on a presentation about their Association and even sit in gallery and ask questions.

B. Elgie suggested that LDAO could let SEAC know what their concerns are and have a chance to express them.

J. Bevers wondered if the trustees had addressed some of the concerns SEAC that prompted LDAO to leave SEAC.

J. Hlusko replied that trustees addressed some of LDAO's issues and amendments were made to the Special Education Plan prior to the trustees approving the plan.

A second question was an offer to present information on a new association representing parents who have children with Attention Deficit Disorders.

A. Collard indicated that SEAC would welcome the information.

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

E. Whitehouse wondered if SEAC could add the budget to the Agenda each month.

A. Collard noted that it would be pointless if we do not have information.

K. Schaffer suggested that we could have Steven Parfeniuk come in and speak to SEAC when there are changes. She indicated that SEAC should consider their priorities and whether funds should be shifted between the types of staff. Most funding is tied to staffing.

B. Elgie wondered how the EA allocation is going.

K. Schaffer noted that there are about 23 to 25 on hold back right now and the EA Allocation is looked at every 2 weeks at department meetings. She also noted that we are in the middle of collective bargaining right now.

E. Whitehouse wondered about the accessibility needs in new schools and SEAC’s input for that.

D. Danielli advised that principals are giving input on what is needed.

D. Potter wondered if the discussion at last the meeting on the idea of SERT’s for regional hire has been looked into.

K. Schaffer replied that it is very complex and she has not had a chance to speak to anyone on that, but she intends to.

**Agenda Item 8**

**8.1 Review of Additions to Order Paper**

A. Collard noted that we could now remove the Letter for Speech and Language from the order paper. OPA Results will stay on and add recruitment of new SEAC members to the list.

**8.3 Motion to Adjourn**

D. Danielli/J. Barton

**#35-08**

**“THAT the meeting adjourn.”**

**CARRIED**

Time: 8:50 p.m.

Recorded by: Lynnette Dwyer