

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 6, 2009.

Present: Amy Collard (Member at Large) (Chair); Don Vrooman, (Alt. Trustee); Amy McKenzie (Halton Council of Home and School Associations); Greg Allen (ABC); Jacqueline Bevers (Member at Large); Paulyne Lack (Tourette's Syndrome Assoc.); Bruce Jones (Alt. Trustee); Daryl Potter (Autism Ont.) (Vice Chair); Lynn Clark (Easter Seal Society); Donna Danielli (Trustee); Dianna Bower (Halton Down Syndrome); Anita Phillips (Alt. ABC); Karen Poole-Lawrence (Alt. Easter Seals Society); Leslie Howchin (Community Living)

Resource Staff: David Boag, Superintendent of Education; Pamela Cooley, Secretary; Julie Armstrong (HEPA) Lynne Gurzi (HDEEA);

Regrets: Jennifer Hlusko (Trustee)

Absent: Mary Jane Farrish (HSPA); Janet Barton (Alt. Community Living); Erin Walker (Autism Ont.); Patricia Molnar (PSSP); Lisa Griffiths (PSSP)

Agenda Item 1- Opening

1.1 Welcome and Call to Order

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

1.2 Approval of Agenda

D. Potter/P. Lack

#33-09

“THAT the Agenda be approved.”

CARRIED

Agenda Item 2 - Presentations

2.1 Learning Disabilities Association of Halton – Heather Holden

Heather Holden did a presentation outlining some suggested changes to the way the Special Education Plan should be reviewed and updated and emphasized the important role SEAC has. She also provided suggestions to improve the special education programs and services in the Halton District School Board.

L. Clark asked where a good starting point would be as a SEAC to start making some changes.

H. Holden responded that it is important to fill out the Survey that was handed out at tonight's meeting. This survey is going to be taken by SEACs around the province. It is important for SEAC reps to express the voice of their organization. Also, SEAC training would be beneficial.

D. Danielli noted that she encourages LDAH to come back to the table and help.

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

D. Danielli pointed out 2 minor changes to the minutes.

P. Lack/A. Mckenzie

#34-09

“That the minutes of the September 8, 2009 meeting be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

4.2 Order Paper

SEAC membership Progress Report:

D. Boag mentioned there is an information report going to the Board about SEAC nominations. New Vision doesn't qualify as an organization, thus will not be joining the SEAC table. CADDAC has withdrawn their application. They are going to focus more on some provincial issues.

D. Bower asked that the trustees consider having a third community representative at the table again as there is no rep for Blind and Low Vision at the table.

Discussion followed regarding the number of community reps on SEAC in relation to the number of associations represented. D. Bower mentioned that in the past, there were three community reps on SEAC with the same number of associations that are represented now. The number of community reps was never in relation to the number of associations, but to the number of Trustees.

Subject Acceleration Progress Report:

D. Boag noted that he is hoping there will be a report in November.

Grade 8 Programs for Slower Learners report:

D. Boag gave an explanation of these programs. He explained that they are hands on programs for students that may or may not have an IEP. If they do not have an IEP, they will have one once they start

these programs. He also explained that these programs can be considered Special Education programs as these students are working below grade level and they do have modified programming.

A. Collard suggested moving this item into the financial reporting discussion that will take place.

Primary Language Class and Early Language Development Class discussions:

S. Roszell is looking at this. She hopes to have some feedback in November or December.

Number of Grade 8 students affected by the closure of nine LD classes:

Quoted in Superintendent's report.

Number of EAs and number of students requiring an EA for each of the last five years (elementary and secondary):

Quoted in Superintendent's report

Primary Literacy Program (Jolly Phonics) Presentation:

Presentation will be in November.

Self contained placement process discussion:

Department is looking into this. D. Boag is hoping to bring this back in December.

Wait time calculation process in relation to CCAC's new service delivery model:

CCAC is coming to meet with D. Boag this week. The service delivery model for Speech and Language now require referrals to go through a Speech and Language Pathologist. The issue here is that the Board only has 10 SLPs and this affects the wait time for these referrals. D. Boag is hoping the meeting this week will lead to some sort of compromise on the process.

D. Bower said that the Speech and Language issue really needs to be looked at Board-wide with the support of SEAC.

J. Bevers asked if there is any intent by the Board to hire more Speech and Language Pathologists.

D. Boag replied that he needs to look into this, and also the possibility of providing these resources in another way.

A. Collard will invite CCAC to come back to SEAC after the meeting this week.

Staff Development:

PD for staff will be shared with SEAC on an ongoing basis. Any PD opportunities for SEAC members will be shared as well. The monthly PD calendar will be sent out.

AODA regarding language and sensitivity:

D. Boag mentioned that he talked to psych staff. The language is still there within the DSM4 assessment tool but there is a much heightened awareness and sensitivity by our psychology staff when providing diagnostic information to parents.

A. Collard suggested incorporating a statement about language sensitivity into the plan.

D. Bower suggested quoting AODA language guidelines.

Time spent by social workers and CYCs with students who have IEPs:
Quoted in Superintendent's report.

SERT support changes due to closure of LD classes:
Quoted in Superintendent's report

Calendar of Spec Ed events:
Quoted in Superintendent's report

Agenda Item 5 – Communication to SEAC and Current Successes

5.1 Superintendent's Report

Board Website:

Bruce Smith came to a department meeting to explain how Student Services will have a little more control on the content and design. Bruce suggested coming to the December meeting. D. Boag would like to have a draft of key information for him.

Data Dashboard:

Some ideas are highlighted for items that should be on the data dashboard. D. Boag asked for any other suggestions to add or comments about what is already there.

D. Potter suggested adding funding for identified children and number of graduations vs. those that should have graduated in the student data section. He also suggested adding teacher training hours in the staff data section.

There was discussion regarding EQAO scores. D. Boag mentioned the Ministry carefully tracks EQAO scores so this data is readily available.

P. Lack asked how schools are monitored whether they are doing well or scoring poorly.

D. Boag noted that this is bigger than a Spec Ed issue. A lot of work is done through Student Success with focused intervention in particular schools and finding best practices in schools that are doing well. This information would come out of Program Services. As a SEAC, we want to focus on identified kids and what their success rate is on these assessments.

J. Armstrong mentioned what she does as a principal to keep her school on track with scores. Principals look at school scores over a 3 year period. They look at strengths, where the students scores are (provincial average, below, above) and they also examine PM benchmarks, reading assessments, etc, and take all of this information and find out what to do as a school to address these issues. They come up with an appropriate rubric and input this information into lesson plans.

P. Lack expressed a concern about the number of kids that do not do these tests and how they are moving along.

D. Boag replied that looking at the EQAO data, the number of exemptions is actually pretty small. He mentioned that he can hopefully include this data as part of the data dashboard.

D. Potter and D. Boag will work collaboratively over the next couple of months towards a prototype of the data dashboard.

Budget:

D. Boag met with the budget department. He said they want to examine how Sped Ed money is spent this year and where the focus should be for next year. He asked if Steven should come back to SEAC to present.

D. Bower said that budget information should come together with the plan. SEAC used to get a comparative so that review of the budget is done with SEAC members for input to put it together with the plan.

A. Collard said it is important that the information is presented to SEAC in a logical way so they can put the two items together. SEAC needs to look at this year's plan and budget to see what passed so when they do it again in May there is a starting point.

Discussion followed on budget processes with the plan.

D. Bower noted that a SEAC rep should be sitting on the accessibility committee and volunteered to do this.

D. Boag will talk to Superintendent Obeng about this.

5.2 School Board Communications to Parents re: Special Needs Students

None

5.3 Chairs Report & Correspondence

A. Collard wrote thank you letters to the former members for their services and support.

5.4 Association Reports

D. Bower provided an association report for Halton Down Syndrome Association. She discussed some new initiatives and some upcoming conferences and events.

J. Bevers asked if association reports and information can be passed onto principals.

D. Boag said he will investigate this.

A. Collard suggested putting this type of info on a SEAC Page on the website.

A. McKenzie provided an association report for Halton Council for Home and School Associations regarding a Parent Reach Out grant from the Ministry of Education.

Discussion on A. McKenzie's report followed.

5.5 Trustee Reports

D. Danielli discussed the following items:

- There is a large concern around H1N1; there have been lots of meetings around this issue.
- Facilities: There are many capital projects being looked at right now.
- Trustees are looking at the Operational plan and Long Term Accommodation Plan.
- A number of trustees took part in Specialist High Skills Major conference and there will be upcoming info nights on pathways.

Agenda Item 6 – Questions from the Public

None

Agenda Item 7 – SEAC Discussion/Question Period

D. Bower reminded everyone about the PIC conference. There will be a letter coming to everyone.

Agenda Item 8

8.1 Review of Additions to Order Paper

Add: website discussions

A. Collard reviewed upcoming presentations: Therapeutic Listening, PL programming, Budget discussion and Bruce Smith from IT is to come in December for the website discussion.

8.3 Motion to Adjourn

P. Lack/D. Bower

#35-09

“THAT the meeting adjourn.”

CARRIED

Time: 9:38

Recorded by: Pamela Cooley