

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 September 9, 2008.

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

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

Regrets: Jennifer Hlusko (Trustee); Susan Wolak, (VIEWS); Sue Adams (Alt. LDAH); Amy Collard (Member at Large); Lynne Gurzi (HDEAA)

Absent: Don Vrooman, (Alt. Trustee); Maggie Diltz (VOICE); Mary Jane Farrish (HSPA); Erin Walker (Autism Ont.); Janet Barton (Alt. Community Living); Craig Newman (Alt. VIEWS)

There are no representatives for VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children or VIEWS – Support for Families of Blind and Visually Impaired Children.

Agenda Item 1

1.1 Welcome and Call to Order

L. Clark (Vice-Chair) called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. She noted that SEAC is currently without a Chair and that Amy Collard has indicated her interest in taking over as Chair of SEAC for the interim. Unfortunately, Amy Collard was unable to attend this evening's meeting due to unforeseen circumstances. L. Clark would like to defer the selection of an interim Chair for SEAC until the next SEAC meeting.

Motion to remove agenda item 1.2 Selection of Interim Chair.

D. Danielli /E. Whitehouse

#27-08

“THAT the selection of Interim Chair for SEAC be included in the October 7th SEAC Meeting Agenda”.

CARRIED

1.2 Selection of Interim Chair for SEAC

To be voted on at next SEAC meeting.

1.3 Approval of Agenda

D. Danielli/E. Whitehouse

#28-08

“THAT the Agenda be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

Agenda Item 2

2.1 Presentations

Easter Seals Society

L. Clark indicated that throughout the year she would like to see each Association from SEAC present a small information session on their association. This evening the Easter Seals Society will be presenting. L. Clark introduced the presenters, Morag Stewart and Susan Smith.

L. Clark wondered how many families are helped by Easter Seals per year.

S. Smith answered that at least 20,000 are registered and 8,000 per year use Easter Seals services.

B. Elgie asked when the name change to Easter Seals Society.

S. Smith replied that is happened sometime in the 1960's when the stamps came out.

L. Clark thanked the presenters.

L. Clark welcomed SEAC's newest representative, Christopher McGee from the Halton Down Syndrome Association, to the meeting. She also noted that Trustee Janie Hames is in the audience this evening.

Agenda Item 3

3.1 Call for Notices of Motion/Reports to the Board

None

Agenda Item 4

4.1 Approval of the Minutes

B. Elgie/D. Potter

#29-08

“THAT the Minutes of the June 10, 2008 meeting be approved.”

CARRIED

4.2 Motions/Reports of last meeting

B. Elgie asked if we would be receiving information on the EA allocation.

K. Schaffer advised that she would be talking about this further into the agenda.

4.3 Order Paper

4.4 Matters Arising

Strategic Plan – K. Schaffer

K. Schaffer advised that she would provide members with a hard copy of the newest Operational Plan of the Halton Strategic Plan at the next meeting. She noted that the Operational Plans now include targets to improve the EQAO results at Grade 6 and the OSSLT for students with learning disabilities.

K. Schaffer advised members that Sara Budworth, one of our Members at Large has, with regret, resigned her position on SEAC. K. Schaffer requested direction regarding this vacant spot on SEAC.

D. Danielli would be happy to sit on a committee to interview applicants. She requested SEAC’s input regarding the members’ wishes but indicated that the trustees would make the final decision regarding the vacancy.

E. Whitehouse wondered about looking at the people that had applied in the past and were not selected.

E. Whitehouse asked what the qualifications would be for this position.

K. Schaffer advised that previous criteria included they have global perspective, genuine interest in special needs students and special education programs and services, the ability to participate as a team player, good communication skills and a varied background.

D. Danielli would like a copy of the criteria sent to her electronically. She advised that the Ministry has requirements as well. She also noted they must also meet eligibility the same as trustees and cannot work for the board or be a representative of an Association already represented on SEAC.

K. Schaffer added that they must also be eligible to vote for Trustees in Halton District School Board.

D. Danielli indicated that based on discussion, SEAC members would recommend that the Member at Large spot be filled, so she will take it to the Trustees.

J. Bevers wanted to mention that the SEAC awards, which took place in June, went very well. She read a letter that was written to her from a Special Education Resource Teacher that was thanking SEAC for these wonderful awards and how much it meant to her.

Agenda Item 5

5.1 Superintendent's Report

Everyone in attendance received a copy of K. Schaffer's Superintendent's Report Memo, which included information on Self Contained Classes and Programs for 2008-09, the IEP Training Series for Teachers, Self-contained Classes for Students with Learning Disabilities, Improvements Planned for IEPs of Gifted Students and Changes to the IPRC Process for Self-contained Classes. Questions and answers followed.

L. Clark asked about the class sizes for the self-contained classes for students with learning disabilities.

K. Schaffer advised that 23 classes are now 9 students or under and 8 is the mandated number in legislation.

E. Whitehouse wondered why there are only 26 classes now.

K. Schaffer replied that all recommendations to IPRC had been processed. She wondered if the new assistive technology sessions at the Learning Centres were starting to make a difference.

B. Jones asked if any programs are capped.

K. Schaffer replied that the PLCs are all full with 10 students each. The new Communication Transition and Functional Communication classes are also fully subscribed to date. There are openings in behaviour and gifted classes and that Student Services would problem solve individual cases. Gifted programs are not capped.

P. Lack requested information on professional development plans for the teachers of our self-contained classes for learning disabilities.

K. Schaffer advised that sessions are planned for teaching Literacy with accommodations, strategies to support math instruction and training on assistive technology. The first session is scheduled for Friday, September 12 and the topic is DRA with accommodations.

J. Bevers wondered how many students received SEA computers.

K. Schaffer estimated that 125 had been formatted during the summer and are on the way to schools. She did not have the exact number on hand.

D. Potter wondered if the board had received an open licence or, if not, will it be coming.

K. Schaffer replied that we have been given the funding to support Premier Software Accessibility software package for all board computers and home use. Information on home use will be shared with the system shortly.

E. Whitehouse suggested that the board look at having SERTS as a regional hire so that they would be protected from fluctuations in regular school staffing. She is concerned about the number of staff changes.

5.2 School Board Communications to Parents re: Special Needs Students

None

5.3 Working Group Report

D. Danielli advised that the group has not met since last spring. L. Clark advised that this group could be disbanded until new issues were identified.

5.4 Chairs Report & Correspondence

L. Clark advised the public attending tonight's meeting to fill out the "Questions from the public" form provided and bring them to the table and they would be read out and answered.

5.5 Association Reports

P. Lack wanted to let everyone know of the Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario's Conference 2008. It will be taking place in Niagara Falls on Saturday November 8th, at the Clarion President Hotel. She asked if the flier could be sent to all schools for parents to see. She will give a copy to L. Dwyer who can distribute.

5.6 Trustee Reports

D. Danielli advised that this has been a very busy time. First board meeting took place August 27th and another one last Wednesday, which they were not able to conclude, as there was a noisy gallery and they had to adjourn. The starting time for board meetings has been moved to 7 p.m.

Agenda Item 6

6.1 Questions from the Public:

K. Schaffer read 3 questions from the public and responded.

Agenda Item 7

SEAC Discussion/Questions:

B. Elgie wondered if hard copy mail-outs to SEAC members could be eliminated and SEAC members only receive electronic copies of information.

K. Schaffer advised that SEAC members, who do not wish to receive hard copies in the mail, please e-mail L. Dwyer and she can take you off the mailing list.

D. Danielli asked if Trustees would be able to get copies of the SEAC Minutes sooner.

K. Schaffer advised that if trustees are content with the unapproved Draft of the Minutes, she will arrange for L. Dwyer e-mail trustees a copy as soon as the draft copy is completed after each meeting.

D. Danielli would like that.

A. McKenzie asked if SEAC could get update on Behaviour Resource Classes at next meeting and wondered if regular teachers will be getting trained in Collaborative Problem solving.

K. Schaffer would gather the requested information for next meeting.

E. Whitehouse wondered if lunch monitors could be trained in properly handling children.

K. Schaffer introduced Julie Armstrong, Principal at Robert Baldwin P.S. as HEPA's new representative to SEAC. J. Armstrong provides a link to the elementary principals and vice-principals.

E. Whitehouse requested that SEAC ask someone from the Learning Disabilities Association if they would be able to do a presentation for SEAC.

L. Clark agreed to get in touch with them and ask.

D. Danielli noted that there are many Associations around table who we should invite to do a presentation for SEAC as well.

D. Potter wondered how presentations from other groups would help SEAC.

E. Whitehouse would like to hear about what the group recommends for programming and services and what techniques they have found work.

Agenda Item 8

8.1 Review of Additions to Order Paper

8.2 Review of Meeting Process

D. Danielli would like to remove this section from the minutes and all were in consensus.

D. Danielli also wanted to note that Lynne Gurzi was not at the meeting this evening due to the passing of her husband. She would like to extend our sympathies to her in this sad time.

8.3 Motion to Adjourn

D. Danielli/P. Lack

#30-08

“THAT the meeting adjourn.”

CARRIED

Time: 9:30 p.m.

Recorded by: Lynnette Dwyer