

HALTON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Special Education Advisory Committee – (Hybrid Meeting)

Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at 7:00 pm

MINUTES

Present: Naveed Ahmed (Trustee); Carole Baxter (Trustee); Evelyn Bursey (Community Living North Halton); Robbie Brydon (Trustee); Melissa Dockeray (Easter Seals Society); Kajsa; Klassen (Member At Large); Kate Lambacher (Association for Bright Children); Sarah Lansley (Easter Seals Society); Sophia Siddiqi (Halton Down Syndrome Association); Melissa Somer (Member At Large); Erin Sproule (VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children); Kathy Turner (VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children)

Staff: Sarah Cronin (Instructional Program Leader); Audrey Draaisma (Instructional Program Leader); Curtis Ennis (Director of Education); Christine Howard (Manager, Special Education Services); Colette Ruddock (Superintendent Special Education); Conan Spruin (Principal, Special Education); Riley Watson (Instructional Program Leader); Marta Zammit (Office Supervisor, Special Education)

Regrets: Alison Brindle (Centre for Diverse Learners-Halton); Surekha Kanithi (Association for Bright Children); Joanna Oliver (Trustee); Katie Schleifer (Member At Large); Nadia Toric (Community Living Burlington); Diane Vandenbossche (Centre for Diverse Learners-Halton);

1.0 Opening

1.1 Welcome and Call to Order

Director Ennis extended a warm welcome and expressed gratitude to the committee members. Chair Brindle and Vice-Chair Schleifer were unable to attend and sent their regrets. In their absence, Superintendent Ruddock offered to step in as Chair, and with no other volunteers, assumed the role and officially called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1.2 Honouring the Land and Territory

C. Ruddock read the Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands.

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1.3 Approval of Agenda

#212-23

Moved by: C. Baxter

Seconded by: K. Lambacher

Be it resolved that the September 12, 2023 agenda for the Special Education Advisory Committee be approved as presented.

Carried Unanimously

1.4 Minutes of June 6, 2023

#213-23

Moved by: C. Baxter

Seconded by: N. Ahmed

Be it resolved that the minutes of the June 6, 2023 Special Education Advisory Committee be approved.

Carried Unanimously

2.0 Action

2.1 Staff Presentation on how HDSB supports Gifted Learners

Sarah Cronin and Riley Watson, Instructional Program Leaders presented on “How HDSB supports Gifted Learners”. There was an opportunity for a discussion and questions after the presentation. Please see the slideshow [here](#) .

2.2 Staff Presentation on Structured Learning Class

Christine Howard, Manager, Special Education Services and Audrey Draaisma, Instructional Program Leader presented on “Structured Learning Class”. There was an opportunity for questions after the presentation. Please see the slideshow [here](#) .

3.0 SEAC Discussion/Question Period

A question was raised about CPP literacy, emphasizing the critical need for an adequate allocation of resources and staff training. Superintendent Ruddock noted that S. Marks provided a detailed presentation to SEAC before his departure, highlighting the extensive work done by the department, especially in structured reading training. Almost all elementary and secondary special education resource teachers (SERT) have been trained, and resources have been provided to schools with trained staff. Plans are in place to train the remaining 30 SERTS this October. Additionally, all

self-contained teachers in LD and behavior resource classes have received Wilson training. C. Howard is currently focusing on implementing structured reading in life skills and CPP classes.

4.0 Communication to SEAC

4.1 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Ruddock shared the following

- 1. 2023-24 School Year-** An update on school year startup was provided.
- 2. Summer Learning / Support** - We had a very successful summer learning program this year. In addition to the offerings from School Programs and Gary Allan, SES hosted learning sessions for a range of special education needs and age/grade ranges, including Assistive Technology camps, Structured Reading Intensive, and entry to school programs for students with Autism. The Student Well-Being Department also provided virtual mental health supports throughout the summer, using our CYC and Social Workers. Finally, our SLPs and Psychoeducational Consultants conducted additional assessments over the summer.
- 3. Entry to School - Transitions** - Again this year, the Ministry provided funding for staff to host transition meetings for students with significant special education or mental health needs, as well as support for students returning from Remote Learning to In-Person. These funds were used to support students visiting the school, as well as case conferences with parent/guardian and other key stakeholders to support students who are experiencing greater challenges in returning to school.
- 4. New Language Curriculum** - The Ministry of Education released the much anticipated new Language Curriculum Gr 1-9 in June. An interdepartmental team is collaborating with the rollout, resource selection and staff professional development to fully implement the curriculum. We look forward to sharing more information with SEAC over the course of this implementation.

4.2 Association Reports

Erin Sproule provided an update from VOICE, expressing excitement about the upcoming in-person conference scheduled for October 13th and 14th. The conference is designed to cater to both professional and parents. Agenda can be found [here](#).

4.3 Trustee's Report

Trustee Baxter reported that the first board meeting occurred last week, making a return to the regular meeting schedule. Trustee Baxter also expressed gratitude to all staff members for their significant contributions to the successful startup.

4.4 Committee Reports

Inquiries were raised regarding the scheduling of board committee meetings for the 2023-2024

school year. Staff will verify these dates with the Superintendents and provide the information.

4.4 Committee Reports

- Parent Involvement Committee – none
- Accessibility Coordinating Committee – none
- Equity & Inclusive Education Advisory Steering Committee - none
- Mental Health and Well-being Strategy Steering Committee – none

5.0 Next Agenda/Order Paper

Chair Ruddock inquired if any organizations were interested in presenting during the upcoming months of October or November and requested that they inform M. Zammit. E. Sproule from VOICE volunteered to present in October. ABC will provide a presentation in November.

6.0 Adjournment

6.1 Chair Ruddock adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.