

**HALTON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
**Special Education Advisory Committee - (Hybrid Meeting)**

Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at 7:00 pm

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Carole Baxter (Trustee); Kate Lambacher (Association for Bright Children); Surekha Kanithi (Association for Bright Children); Alison Brindle (Centre for Diverse Learners-Halton); Evelyn Bursey (Community Living North Halton); Kathy Turner (Voice for Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing); Kajsa Klassen (Member At Large); Katie Schleifer (Member At Large); Melissa Somer (Member At Large); Melissa Dockeray (Easter Seals Society); Joanna Oliver (Trustee); Diane Vandebossche (Centre for Diverse Learners-Halton)

**Staff:** Colette Ruddock (Superintendent of Special Education); Sean Marks (Principal of Special Education); Lorna Goodrow (SEAC Administrator)

**Absent:** Naveed Ahmed (Trustee); Sarah Lansley (Easter Seals Society); Nadina Toric (Community Living Burlington); Sophia Siddiqi (Halton Down Syndrome Association); Erin Sproule (VOICE for Children Who are Deaf & Hard of Hearing)

**1.0 Opening**

**1.1 Welcome and Call to Order**

Chair Brindle called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**1.2 Honouring the Land and Territory**

Chair Brindle read the Land Acknowledgement

**1.3 Approval of Agenda**

#206-23

Moved by: C. Baxter

Seconded by: K. Lambacher

Be it resolved that the April 4, 2023 agenda for the Special Education Advisory Committee be approved as presented.

**Carried Unanimously**

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#### 1.4 Minutes of March 7, 2023

#207-23

Moved by: K. Klassen

Seconded by: C. Baxter

Be it resolved that the minutes of the March 7, 2023 Special Education Advisory Committee be approved.

**Carried Unanimously**

### **2.0 Action**

2.1 There was a presentation made by G. Echeverria, Principal, Indigenous Rights & Education on the introduction to the work of HDSBs Indigenous Rights & Education Department. There was an opportunity for questions/comments after the presentation.

2.2 The Special Education Plan (SPED) was brought forward as a first draft to SEAC. There was an opportunity for questions about the SPED Plan. The SPED Plan will be brought back to our May SEAC meeting where SEAC members will have the opportunity to approve or not approve the SPED Plan before it goes to the Board for final approval in June, 2023. Superintendent Ruddock commented that the Structured Learning Class Pilot has ended and has been removed from the SPED Plan. S. Marks, Principal of Special Education shared that the Board has implemented our Social Thinking Program with our ASD students and we can have a presentation on this learning at a future SEAC meeting.

2.3 SEAC representative for Board Committees. The below is a list of Committees and volunteers from our SEAC Committee.

- Accessibility and Co-Ordinating Committee - Evelyn Bursey
- Mental Health and Student Well-Being Committee - Kate Lambacher
- Human Rights & Equity Advisory Committee - Kajsa Klassen
- Indigenous Advisory Council - Melissa Somer

### **3.0 SEAC Discussion/Question Period**

Chair Brindle shared that Hamilton Wentworth District School Board is releasing suspension and expulsion data. Is our Board doing the same? Superintendent Ruddock commented that we will be releasing this information and that the overall data is shared. Chair Brindle asked how valuable would it be to see the breakdown of this data and should SEAC ask the Trustees to raise this? Trustee Baxter confirmed that Trustees are aware of the release of this data. K. Lambacher commented that this information can be weaponized and is concerned about this. Trustee Baxter explained that it's not just about numbers, but how we are also addressing and managing the needs of various groups of students.

## **4.0 Communication to SEAC**

Superintendent's Report for April, 2023

**Professional assessments** - We have been making significant gains on the reduction of waitlists for assessments this year. With the funding provided by the Ministry, we will have completed approximately 90 assessments this year through private contracts. In addition, we will once again be completing summer assessments - both psychoeducational and language assessments. This work is funded through our department's operational budget.

**Remote learning** - The Ministry has not announced the continuation of remote learning for 2023-24 and, as such, we are not anticipating funding for this learning model to continue. Without Ministry direction and funding, HDSB will offer a return in-person learning for all students and, for secondary students, e-learning opportunities. The Student Well-Being Department is planning mental health supports for students who would benefit during the transition from remote to in-person learning. Michelle Bates will join June's SEAC to highlight the Mental Health and Well-Being strategy and, specifically, how students may be supported in the transition to in-person learning.

**Gifted Class** - A report will be going to the Board in April, seeking approval to offer a triple grade Self-Contained Gifted class at Sam Sherratt. The class would have one Grade 2, four Grade 4 and eleven Grade 5 students (for a total of 16 students). Combining the three grades would create a more robust learning environment, as well as enhanced social-emotional development.

### **4.2 Association Reports**

K. Turner reported on behalf of Voice for Deaf and Hard of Hearing the following: We have an event coming up in June for all of VOICE in Ontario to go to Great Wolf Lodge. After a few years of not being able to go due to the pandemic, this will be our first one since 2019. Also coming up in May there is a fundraiser with some Moms to raise money for VOICE.

Chair Brindle reported for Centre for Diverse Learners-Halton the following: Are there any community organizations that have additional space for rent?

### **4.3 Trustee Reports**

Trustee Baxter reported the following: The Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Conference is coming up on Saturday, April 29 at Elsie MacGill Secondary School in Milton. This year's theme is Nurturing the Whole Child: Mind, Body and Spirit. This full day event is an excellent opportunity for parents to gather and learn together. Entry and lunch are free and child-minding is available.

Registration is via Google Form at

[https://www.hdsb.ca/our-board/Pages/Get%20Involved/Parent-Involvement-Committee-\(PIC\).aspx](https://www.hdsb.ca/our-board/Pages/Get%20Involved/Parent-Involvement-Committee-(PIC).aspx)

### **4.4 Committee Reports**

None

## **5.0 Next Agenda/Order Paper**

SPED Plan

Budget

June - Mental Health & Well-Being

Human Sex-Trafficking Initiative (in new school year)

Social Thinking for ASD students

Gifted Learners and how to support these students

## **6.0 Adjournment**

6.1 Chair Brindle adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.