

HALTON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Special Education Advisory Committee - (Hybrid Meeting)

Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at 7:00 pm

MINUTES

- Present:** Carole Baxter (Trustee); Surekha Kanithi (Association for Bright Children); Alison Brindle (Centre for Diverse Learners-Halton); Evelyn Burse (Community Living North Halton); Katie Schleifer (Member At Large); Sarah Lansley (Easter Seals Society); Nadina Toric (Community Living Burlington); Melissa Somer (Member At Large); Kajsa Klassen (Member At Large); Melissa Dockeray (Easter Seals Society); Diane Vandenbossche (Centre for Diverse Learners-Halton); Robbie Brydon (Trustee)
- Staff:** Colette Ruddock (Superintendent of Special Education); Sean Marks (Principal of Special Education); Lorna Goodrow (SEAC Administrator);
- Absent:** Kathy Turner (Voice for Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing); Kate Lambacher (Association for Bright Children); Joanna Oliver (Trustee); Erin Sproule (VOICE for Children Who are Deaf & Hard of Hearing); Naveed Ahmed (Trustee); Sophia Siddiqi (Halton Down Syndrome Association)

1.0 Opening

1.1 Welcome and Call to Order

Vice-Chair Schleifer called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

1.2 Honouring the Land and Territory

Vice-Chair Schleifer read the Land Acknowledgement

1.3 Approval of Agenda

#210-23

Moved by: A. Brindle

Seconded by: M. Somer

Be it resolved that the June 6, 2023 agenda for the Special Education Advisory Committee be approved as presented.

Carried Unanimously

1.4 Minutes of May 2, 2023

#211-23

Moved by: C. Baxter

Seconded by: M. Somer

Be it resolved that the minutes of the May 2, 2023 Special Education Advisory Committee be approved.

Carried Unanimously

2.0 Action

2.1 Vice-Chair Schleifer took a vote by Association on the Special Education Plan for 2023-2024. All Associations present (Association for Bright Children, Centre for Diverse Learners-Halton, Community Living Burlington, Easter Seals Society), Members at Large (3) and Trustees Baxter and Brydon were in support of the plan. L. Goodrow emailed Community Living North Halton, Halton Down Syndrome and Voice and asked if they could please email her with their decision on their approval or not of the Special Education Plan 2022-2023 that was shared earlier this month to SEAC. Community Living North Halton replied to L. Goodrow that they do support the Special Education Plan 2022-2023. Halton Down Syndrome and Voice for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children were not in attendance and have not responded to an email sent to them June 6 during the SEAC meeting.

2.2 A presentation was made by M. Bates, Manager, Mental Health, Student Well-Being Department. The presentation is linked [here](#).

There was an opportunity for questions after the presentation. Chair Brindle asked what additional supports will be put in place as there will be no virtual environment going forward for students that have been virtual for about 3 years. M. Bates responded that the department has been working closely with all secondary schools to have supports in place. Superintendent Barnes also commented that there will be “well-being” check-ins. M. Somer wanted to know more about the depth of trauma training. M. Bates responded that the Well-Being Department has worked closely with schools and departments who are looking for more in depth training. K. Schleifer asked about the online survey, and was interested in the students that had barriers to the online process and were they also considered? If not, are you planning to include them in your research? M. Bates responded that absolutely every and all students had an opportunity to participate in a meaningful way. K. Schleifer thanked everyone for their presentation.

2.3 S. Marks, Principal, Special Education Services Department and S. Gardi, Instructional Program Leader presented on the Structured Learning Pilot Project. There was an opportunity for questions after

the presentation. Please see slideshow [here](#).

At this point, Vice-Chair Schleifer thanked Sean Marks for all of his dedication and work during his time in the Special Education Services Department. Sean thanked all of SEAC and welcomed Conan Spruin to the role of Principal, Special Education Services Department.

2.4 E. Burse and N. Toric, presented on behalf of Community Living Burlington and Community Living North Halton respectively. Vice-Chair Schleifer thanked both Evelyn and Nadina for their very interesting and informative presentation. Link to their presentation is [here](#).

3.0 SEAC Discussion/Question Period

Public Question: How might we re-imagine a more inclusive name for the LD classrooms in our schools in Halton? Superintendent Ruddock responded that we want to honor the dignity of our students and protect their identities. We are talking about a consultation process that will capture the voice of our students and families to arrive at a name that will work for everyone and we will look into this further next year.

4.0 Communication to SEAC

Superintendent's Report for June, 2023

1. Summer Learning - The Ministry has provided \$220 000 for summer learning and transitions. The budget emphasis will be on supporting transitions of students. Schools will be able to access central specialized supports from Special Education, Student Well-Being, Equity and Indigenous Education departments, as well as school-based staff, to comprehensively support students with special education needs, mental health needs or simply those returning to in-person learning.

In addition, we are supporting summer learning offerings through Gary Allan (Summer School gr 7-12) and School Programs (K-gr 6) with educational assistants to promote an inclusive model of summer learning for all students. SES will also be offering Assistive Technology camps and Structured Reading Intensive Program for students receiving IRT support.

2. ASSDP - After School Skill Development Program for students with Autism is enveloped funding from the Ministry of Education to run in-year (after school) and summer sessions. The summer sessions will focus on Kindergarten / Grade 1 Entry to School skills - small group one week sessions in each area of the board.

3. Special Athletes Track Meet: Schedule for June 16th at Garth Webb SS. We have over 450 students from elementary schools across HDSB and EC Drury School for the Deaf. It will be sure to be a great day!

4. Good-bye and a welcome - Sadly, Sean Marks, Principal of Special Education, has come to the end of his 5-year term with the department. Sean has many accomplishments of which to be

proud. Of note, he has been a driving force in the implementation of Structured Reading, the Structured Learning Class pilot and the vision for supporting students with autism that will unfold next year. On a personal note, Sean has been a true partner, collaborator and friend. I will miss working with him. At the same time, I would like to welcome Conan Spruin, as Principal of Special Education. Conan brings a wealth of knowledge and passion in supporting students with special education needs, as well as early literacy intervention. Conan will pick up where Sean leaves off, and his skills will serve our team well for the next 5 years!

Thank you to our new and returning SEAC members for your contributions over the course of the year, your advocacy for students and your support for families. Your time and wisdom are greatly appreciated.

4.2 Association Reports

None

4.3 Trustee Reports

Trustee Baxter reported the following: Trustees are very happy to welcome Robbie Brydon to the Board as the newly elected trustee representing Burlington, Wards 1 & 2. Trustees were pleased to welcome Minister of Education Stephen Lecce to north Oakville last week for the groundbreaking ceremony for a new state of the art elementary school that is scheduled to open for the 2024/25 school year.

4.4 Committee Reports

- Accessibility and Co-Ordinating Committee - Evelyn Bursey - none
- Mental Health and Student Well-Being Committee - Kate Lambacher - none
- Human Rights & Equity Advisory Committee - Kajsa Klassen - none
- Indigenous Advisory Council - Melissa Somer - none

5.0 Next Agenda/Order Paper

Structured Learning Class Pilot Results - presentation

6.0 Adjournment

6.1 Vice-Chair Schleifer adjourned the meeting at 8:52 p.m.