

HALTON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Special Education Advisory Committee - (Hybrid Meeting)

Tuesday, March 7, 2023 at 7:00 pm

MINUTES

- Present: Naveed Ahmed (Trustee); Carole Baxter (Trustee); Kate Lambacher (Association for Bright Children); Surekha Kanithi (Association for Bright Children); Alison Brindle (Centre for Diverse Learners-Halton); Nadina Toric (Community Living Burlington); Evelyn Burse (Community Living North Halton); Sarah Lansley (Easter Seals Society); Sophia Siddiqi (Halton Down Syndrome Association); Rebecca Hurren (Halton Down Syndrome Association); 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)
- Staff: David Boag (Superintendent Special Education); Sean Marks (Principal of Special Education); Lorna Goodrow (SEAC Administrator)
- Absent: Joanna Oliver (Trustee); Diane Vandebossche (Centre for Diverse Learners-Halton); 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 7:05 p.m.

1.2 Honouring the Land and Territory

Chair Brindle read the Land Acknowledgement

1.3 Approval of Agenda

#204-23

Moved by: C. Baxter

Seconded by: K. Klassen

Be it resolved that the March 7, 2023 agenda for the Special Education Advisory Committee be approved as presented.

Carried Unanimously

1.4 Minutes of February 7, 2023

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#205-23

Moved by: N. Toric

Seconded by: C. Baxter

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

Carried Unanimously

2.0 Action

2.1 S. Siddiqi and R. Hurren presented on behalf of the Halton Down Syndrome Association. There was an opportunity for questions/comments after the presentation.

2.2 A presentation was made by Faith Jamael, Case Manager of Child First Initiative. There was an opportunity to ask questions/comments after the presentation. Superintendent Boag introduced G. Echeverria, System Principal of Indigenous Rights and Education for our Board. G. Echeverria thanked everyone for their time and will connect with Faith at a later date. Chair Brindle thanked Faith for her time and making us aware of this wonderful program.

2.3 Superintendent of Business Services R. Negoj, Jay Chanthavong, Controller of Financial Services and Vanessa Frias, Budget Manager presented a budget overview for SEAC. There was an opportunity for questions/comments during and after the presentation.

3.0 SEAC Discussion/Question Period

None

4.0 Communication to SEAC

Superintendent's Report for March, 2023

1. AT Update

The Assistive Technology Team has rolled out approximately 1050 devices this academic year to fill new prescriptions and 440 upgrades to current technology. The timeline from submission of a claim to the students receiving their prescribed SEA device is one week. We are also excited to be piloting some new initiatives with emerging technologies in supporting students through interactive displays, virtual and augmented reality, robotics and interactive sensory systems. As technologies evolve, we are becoming better equipped to remove barriers and provide students the opportunities to demonstrate their true abilities and access more pathways.

2. Structured Learning Class Update

As of June 30, 2023, the Structured Learning Classes Pilot will have completed its second year. The Pilot began in September of 2021 at 3 locations in Halton: P.L. Robertson, Heritage Glen, and Alexander's Public School. The purpose of this Pilot was to offer students with an ASD diagnosis a small class environment to work specifically on Social Thinking and the 10 core concepts, while still engaging in the Ontario curriculum. Students were selected for these classes through an application process overseen by Special Education Services. Students needed to be in either grade 4 or 5 for the 2021-22 school year. The class size was capped at 6. Over the course of the past 2 years, there have been 17 students pass through the program. 14 students have been with us for the full two years and 3 students began the program and left early for various reasons. We are currently in the process of transitioning all the students back to their home schools. The SLC educators, along with SES staff, will continue to provide support to the schools as the students reintegrate and apply the skills they've learned over the past two years. We will use next year to assess the student's growth based on Social Thinking concepts, and make decisions on how we continue to support students with ASD.

3. SEAC Representation on Board Committees

So far Board committees are asking for SEAC representation on the following committees:

- a. School Year Calendar Committee
- b. Accessibility Committee

4.2 Association Reports

Sarah Lansley from Easter Seals Ontario reported the following:

March Is Easter Seals Month 2023. Easter Seals Ontario is proud to dedicate the month of March to raising awareness and support for children and youth with physical disabilities through our annual campaign. March Is Easter Seals Month (MIESM). Easter Seals Ontario is a charitable organization that is dedicated to improving the lives of children and youth with physical disabilities. We aim to create a more inclusive, accessible, and equitable society where kids with physical disabilities are valued, respected, and given the opportunities to reach their full potential. For 76 years, our annual month-long MIESM campaign has helped make progress toward achieving these goals by promoting understanding of the challenges and experiences of Easter Seals kids and families. This year, we are shining a light on the stories, perspectives, and contributions of individuals with physical disabilities. During the month of March, we will launch various initiatives and activities in local communities and across digital platforms that raise awareness and support for our cause. By participating in MIESM, we can make a direct impact on the lives of Easter Seals kids and create a better future for all individuals with physical disabilities. With the launch of MIESM, we will announce our 2023 Provincial Easter Seals Ambassadors as youth representatives for the campaign and the organization. Now in its 76th year, the Provincial Easter Seals Ambassador program continues to provide a platform for kids with physical disabilities to share their journeys and develop the skills to effectively use their

voices to advocate for themselves and others. Through their advocacy, they can empower even more kids with physical disabilities to pursue their dreams and make their mark on the world. Join us this March to help create a more inclusive, accessible, and equitable society for children and youth with physical disabilities. You have the power to make a difference. Spread awareness about the campaign by following Easter Seals Ontario on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter at @EasterSealsON, or show your support by making a donation or registering an Easter Seals fundraising team at MarchIsEasterSealsMonth.org. By coming together, we can give more Easter Seals kids the opportunity to live their best lives.

4.3 Trustee Reports

The 2023/2024 school year calendar has been approved and is now awaiting final approval by the Ministry of Education. The calendar can be found [here](#)

The Student Trustee election took place on Feb 23rd. Grade 7-12 students were eligible to vote online and 2 high schools hosted in person voting for the first time, with fantastic success and assistance from their local municipalities. The new Student Trustees are grade 11 students Sultan Alimzhanov who attends Abbey Park High School in Oakville and Shrena Sribalan who attends Craig Kielburger Secondary School in Milton. They will begin their term of office on August 1, 2023.

4.4 Committee Reports

None

5.0 Next Agenda/Order Paper

None

6.0 Adjournment

6.1 Chair Brindle adjourned the meeting at 9:18 p.m.