

HALTON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Special Education Advisory Committee – (Hybrid Meeting)

Tuesday, November 7, 2023 at 7:00 pm

MINUTES

Present: Naveed Ahmed (Trustee); Carole Baxter (Trustee); Evelyn Bursey (Community Living North Halton); Alison Brindle (Centre for Diverse Learners-Halton); Surekha Kanithi (Association for Bright Children); Kajsa Klassen (Member At Large); Kate Lambacher (Association for Bright Children); Sarah Lansley (Easter Seals Society); Jennifer Legare (Autism Ontario); Amanda Winch (Autism Ontario)

Staff: Colette Ruddock (Superintendent Special Education); Conan Spruin (Principal, Special Education); Marta Zammit (Office Supervisor, Special Education); Sarah Barham (Vision Itinerant Teacher); Alysha Carnegie (Vision Itinerant Teacher); Daniel Felton (Vision Itinerant Teacher); Helen Murphy (Vision Itinerant Teacher); Nazanin Poirier (Vision Itinerant Teacher)

Regrets: Diane Vandenbossche (Centre for Diverse Learners-Halton); Erin Sproule (VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children); Sophia Siddiqi (Halton Down Syndrome Association); Robbie Brydon (Trustee); Melissa Somer (Member At Large); Nadia Toric (Community Living Burlington); Katie Schleifer (Member At Large); Kathy Turner (VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children); Melissa Dockeray (Easter Seals Society)

1.0 Opening

1.1 Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Brindle called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1.2 Honouring the Land and Territory

Chair Brindle read the Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands

1.3 Addressing SEAC Procedures

Chair Brindle clarified that, upon careful review of Roberts Rules and consultations with Board staff, it has been confirmed that meeting minutes serve to document the actions taken by the committee or the voting body, rather than capturing comments or objections from individual members of the group.

Street Address: J.W. Singleton Education Centre • 2050 Guelph Line, Burlington, Ontario L7P 5A8

Mailing Address: J.W. Singleton Education Centre • P.O. Box 5005, Stn. LCD 1, Burlington, Ontario L7R 3Z2

Phone: 905-335-3663 | 1-877-618-3456 Fax: 905-335-9802

www.hdsb.ca

Methods to capture comments or objections are: a motion that is seconded and voted upon; a Minority Report submitted to the Chair of the Board and appended to the Special Education Plan.

1.4 Approval of Agenda

#215-23

Moved by: C. Baxter

Seconded by: N. Ahmed

A request was made to address the process of sharing the Working Together document with parents. Chair Brindle has incorporated this item into the SEAC discussion period.

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

Carried Unanimously

1.5 Minutes of September 12, 2023

#216-23

Moved by: C. Baxter

Seconded by: J. Legare

Carried Unanimously

1.6 Minutes of October 3, 2023

#217-23

Moved by: A. Winch

Seconded by: S. Lansley

Carried Unanimously

2.0 Action

2.1 Blind Low Vision Staff Presentation

The Blind Low Vision team presented on the supports and services for students who are blind or low vision. There was an opportunity for questions after the presentation. More information can be found [here](#).

2.2 Presentation from The Association for Bright Children of Ontario (ABC)

K. Lambacher provided a presentation on understanding and supporting the needs of gifted students. More information can be found [here](#). There was an opportunity for questions after the presentation.

3.0 SEAC Discussion/Question Period

3.1 Process of Sharing the Working Together Document with Parents

The issue of sharing the Working Together Document with parents was raised, with K. Lambacher highlighting concerns that many parents are unaware of this resource due to delayed distribution. Although the information is available on the website, it appears parents are not informed about its existence. K. Lambacher inquired whether there is a formal obligation for school and teachers to provide this information to parents of struggling students.

In response, Superintendent Ruddock referenced the Special Education Plan, specifying that the Working Together Booklet is to be provided to families either upon registration, if special education needs are identified, or before the first school resource team meeting.

The discussion highlighted the need to inform parents about the documentation. Superintendent Ruddock noted the feedback and will review the language in the Special Education Plan along with re-messaging expectations to administrators, clarifying that it is the responsibility of school administrators, not teachers to provide parents with the information.

4.0 Communication to SEAC

4.1 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Ruddock shared the following:

1. **Grade 4 CCAT7:** Administration is now complete. Families will receive their child's results in late November. Families will be informed at this time whether their child meets HDSB criteria to continue on in the gifted screening and/or identification process.
2. **CPP Information Evenings:** The Community Pathways Program is a Self-Contained Special Education placement for high school students with an exceptionality of Intellectual Disability- Developmental Disability or Mild Intellectual Disability. Special Education Services will be providing two virtual Regional Program Information Sessions for the Community Pathways Program to support centralized messaging for HDSB families. Both sessions will address the same information, so parent(s) and/or guardian(s) only attend one of the following:
Virtual CPP Information Night:
Monday November 6th (7:00 pm) [MEETING LINK](#)
Tuesday November 7th (7:00 pm) [MEETING LINK](#)

4.2 Association Reports

J. Legare from Autism Ontario provided the following update:

Event: Webinar Mini Series: Mental Health Matters

Date: Part 1: For Young Children – November 16, 2023, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Part 2: For School Aged Children – November 23, 2023, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Part 3: For Teens – November 30, 2023, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Link: <https://bit.ly/4762mEb> (all registration)

Join us for a 3-part mini-series about mental health and well-being in childhood and adolescence. This mini-series is intended to support parents and caregivers in understanding their child's mental health and provide general strategies and information on what can be done at home to promote coping and improvements in well-being.

Each part is divided by age; however, some strategies may be helpful for your child regardless of their chronological age.

Event: Moderated Webinar: Autism, Sexuality and the Law with Dr. Isabelle Hénault

November 22, 2023, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Link: <https://bit.ly/3QbnKBI>

In this webinar, strategies and tools adapted to the autistic profile in terms of education and prevention of illegal and inappropriate sexual behaviour will be presented, in addition to concrete cases. The notion of consent will be addressed using appropriate educational tools.

Workshop: Home for the Holidays

Date: December 20, 2023, 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Link: <https://www.autismontario.com/civicrm/event/info?id=9018>

Join Bethany Brewin (Occupational Therapist, M.Sc. O.T.) and Danielle Nolan (Social Worker, MSW RSW) for a winter-themed workshop that aims to support caregivers in continuing to build skills across a variety of areas while having fun as a family and enjoying all the season has to offer. Bethany and Danielle will provide information on 5 different activities you can do at home during the holidays with minimal supplies or preparation. The activities will highlight 5 skill areas: fine motor skills, gross motor skills, sensory skills, calming/mindfulness skills, and socio-emotional skills. This workshop is appropriate for children of all ages.

Chair Brindle from Centre for Diverse Learners Halton provided the following update:

Two workshops taking place this month:

- Teen and Youth Mental Health. A virtual workshop helping teens and their families understand mental health and mental illness.
- No One's Going to Label My Child ! A virtual workshop for black youth and their parents.

Solutions for Learning Conference is taking place on March 1-2, 2024. Information on speakers can be found [here](#).

Members of the Committee received an invitation to participate. Diverse Learners Ontario is collaborating with Sheridan on a research project examining the disproportionate impact of the high diagnosis costs for certain exceptionalities that necessitate a psychologist rather than a physician. Partners interested in involvement and sharing their perspectives are encouraged to reach out to Chair Brindle.

4.3 Trustee's Report

No updates.

4.4 Committee Reports

Accessibility Coordinating Committee - An in person meeting occurred. C. Baxter highlighted the remarkable efforts underway across departments, emphasizing a strong focus on students.

Mental Health and Support Well-being Committee - K. Lambacher reported that the initial meeting occurred, with a primary focus on the student mental health plan, characterized by its student driven and highly collaborative nature.

Human Rights and Equity Advisory Committee - The committee, which had dissolved last fall, has been replaced by a new committee, however there is no requirement for SEAC representation.

5.0 Next Agenda/Order Paper

- Next month nominations will be welcomed for Chair and Vice Chair. If anyone is interested and would like to gain some information on the role please reach out. If more than one person wishes to stand for each of the positions a vote will be taken at the January meeting.

December Meeting: A presentation from the Mental Health and Well- Being team

January Meeting: A presentation from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing team

Presentation request was made for Autism Ontario and CDLH. Chair Brindle confirmed these will be scheduled.

6.0 Adjournment

6.1 Chair Brindle adjourned the meeting at 8:47 pm