

Halton District School Board



HALTON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Special Education Advisory Committee - (Virtual Meeting)

Tuesday, December 7th, 7pm

MINUTES

Present: Heather Gerrits (Trustee); Joanna Oliver (Trustee); Margo Shuttleworth (Trustee); Yalin Gorica (Association for Bright Children); Jenn Heidstra (Association for Bright Children); Lisa Cameron (Autism Ontario); Candice Keem (Community Living Burlington); Melissa Dockeray (Easter Seals Society); Sophia Siddiqi (Halton Down Syndrome Association); Rebecca Hurren (Halton Down Syndrome Association); Alison Brindle (Learning Disabilities Association of Halton/Hamilton); Erin Sproule (VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children); James Baldwin (Member at Large); Diane Miller (Member at Large); Lucille Morris (Member at Large); Tracey Ehl Harrison (Trustee)

Staff: Colette Ruddock (Superintendent); Sean Marks (Principal); Lorna Goodrow (Administrator)

Regrets: Sarah Lansley (Easter Seals Society); Diane Vandebossche (Learning Disabilities Association of Halton/Hamilton); Kathy Turner (VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children)

Guests: Michael and Marcel Jacques

1.0 Opening

1.1 Welcome and Call to Order

A. Brindle called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

1.2 Honouring the Land and Territory

A. Brindle read the Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands

1.3 Approval of Agenda

#182-22 Y. Gorica and M. Shuttleworth

Be it resolved that the Special Education Advisory Committee approved the agenda for December 7, 2021.

Carried Unanimously

1.4 Minutes of November 2, 2021

#183-22 E. Sproule and J. Heidstra

Be it resolved that the minutes for the meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee for November 2, 2021 be approved.

Carried Unanimously

2.0 Action

2.1 A presentation was made by Michael and Marcel Jacques. Superintendent Ruddock and Chair A. Brindle thanked Michael and Marcel for their very interesting and wonderful presentation. There was an opportunity for questions after the presentation.

2.2 Response to communications from other boards

At this point in the meeting, 3 motions were brought forward by Chair A. Brindle.

Motion 1:

That the HDSB Special Education Advisory Committee send a letter to the Minister of Education endorsing Bill 172, the Education Statute Law Amendment Act (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder). This motion has been recorded and passed.

Motion 2:

That the HDSB Special Education Advisory Committee send a letter to the Minister of Education requesting that Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) be included in the list of exceptionalities for school boards.. This motion has been recorded and passed.

Motion 3:

That the HDSB SEAC write a letter asking the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health to consider amending the Immunization of School Pupils Act to include Covid-19 as a “designated disease”, due to the high impact of COVID on the disruption to learning for students with special education needs- This motion has been recorded and passed.

2.3 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Chair A. Brindle brought forward if anyone else would like to take on these roles or not. It was decided that this will be brought up again later in the school year.

3.0 SEAC Discussion/Question Period

Trustee Ehl Harrison asked a question that was submitted by the public:

“I have been trying to understand the process of placement of self-contained classes. As a parent within the special needs community, we have heard frustration time and again from parents whose lives have been disrupted by these forced changes.” The question is referring to how schools are chosen as hosts, and why do the locations sometimes change.

S. Marks, Principal of Special Education Services responded that this process is posted on the HDSB website under [Admin Procedures](#). S. Marks further explained that first consideration is given to students’ needs, then the facilities within a school as well as its ability to accommodate the specific requirements of the self-contained program (eg. opportunities for integration). In addition, the number of self-contained classes within the school, its geographic location and available space are also part of the consideration. In some instances students will need to transfer to a new location as they age out of their current school while still requiring a self-contained placement. Based on this information/feedback, decisions are made and sometimes changes to (sites/locations) need to be updated/changed.

4.0 Communication to SEAC

4.1 Superintendent’s Report

1. Secondary School Timetable Change - On Monday, November 29th, our secondary schools transitioned to a 4 period /day timetable. While there were some challenges with switching student

timetables, largely around coop placements, the return to a “regular” school day has gone smoothly. This return to a regular day aligns with SEAC’s letter to the Minister of Education requesting such a change at the earliest possible.

2. Accessible Outdoor Areas (for CPP and all learners) - Over the past number of months, improvements to the outdoor accessible area at TA Blakelock HS have been underway. This work was a collaboration between the school, Facility Services and Special Education Services. We are most pleased with the results! Georgetown District HS is the next site to see this work, with the plans for you to see [here](#). Anticipated completion is Spring 2022.

3. HDSB’s Educational Assistant Appreciation Day is December 11th. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank the hard work of our educational assistants across our system. EAs are such important caring adults in the lives of our students with special education needs and we could not do this work without them!

M. Dockeray asked that due to the shortage of bus drivers, there have been significant delays in picking up some students with special needs at the end of every day. Is this issue being addressed by our Board? Superintendent Ruddock thanked M. Dockeray for her question and would like to take this concern back to our Superintendent of Business Services, R. Negoj. Superintendent Ruddock will provide a follow up to SEAC around this concern.

4.2 Association Reports

A. Brindle reported the following: Early Bird registration is now open for our 11th Annual Solutions for Learning Conference to be held in March 2021. This event features 4 Keynote speakers and 12 breakout sessions on a wide variety of topics related to learning disabilities and ADHD. It is a wonderful professional development opportunity. We have a keynote speaker who will be speaking on the Ontario Human Rights Commissions report (the Right to Read). This speaker was involved in reviewing the recommendations and will provide valuable insight into how literacy education will need to change in light of this report.

4.3 Trustee Reports

1. Last week was the Board of Trustees annual organizational meeting. We welcome Trustee Margo Shuttleworth as the Chair for the upcoming year. And, we also thank outgoing Chair Andrea Grebenc for her tireless work on behalf of the Board. Trustee Tracey Ehl Harrison will continue in the Vice Chair role.
2. The school formerly known as Ryerson Public School, has been [renamed Makwendam](#) (muck-kwen-dum), meaning “to remember”, in the Anishinaabemowin language.
3. Secondary students in North Oakville Secondary Plan Area, will be [redirected to TA Blakelock](#), starting in the 2022-2023 school year, in order to address the capacity challenges at White Oaks Secondary School. Please note that CPP students will not be redirected.
4. This week has been [declared](#) “Identity and Human Rights Week” by the Halton District School Board. This coincides with the third Human Rights Symposium, which will take place on Thursday, Dec. 9 and Friday, Dec. 10, 2021. The Human Rights Symposium is focused on Identity & Human Rights and will explore how intersecting identities impacts one’s access to and enjoyment of Human Rights.
5. Past Chair Grebenc wrote a letter on behalf of the Board to the Minister of Education regarding the delays to new school builds, and the associated impacts on students, staff and the community.

Thank you for partnering with us here at SEAC and for supporting students. All the best of the season to you, your families and organizations.

4.4 Committee Reports

- PIC - none
- Accessibility Coordinating Committee - none
- Equity and Inclusive Education Advisory Steering Committee - none
- Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy Steering and Advisory Committee - none

5.0 Next Agenda/Order Paper

PPM 81

6.0 Adjournment

6.1 Alison Brindle adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.