

Halton District School Board

HALTON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Special Education Advisory Committee - (Virtual Meeting)

Tuesday, February 2, 2021, 7pm

MINUTES

Present: Alison Brindle (Learning Disabilities Association of Halton/Hamilton); Margo Shuttleworth (Trustee); Heather Gerrits (Trustee); Lucille Morris (Member at Large); Tracey Ehl Harrison (Trustee); Deirdre Woo (Association for Bright Children); Lisa Cameron (Autism Ontario); Diane Miller (Member at Large); Melissa Dockeray (Easter Seals Society); Sarah Lansley (Easter Seals Society); Sophia Siddiqi (Halton Down Syndrome Association); Diane Vandebossche (Learning Disabilities Association of Halton/Hamilton); Joanna Oliver (Trustee);); James Baldwin (Member at Large); Candice Keem (Community Living Burlington)

Staff: Mark Zonneveld (Superintendent); Colette Ruddock (Superintendent); Sean Marks (Principal of Special Education); Lorna Goodrow (Administrator, Student Services)

Regrets: Mike Brown (Halton Down Syndrome Association); Judy Shiels (Voice); Hetal Shah (Association for Bright Children)

Guests: Director S. Miller and A. Grebenc (Chair of the Board)

1.0 Opening

1.1 Welcome and Call to Order

A. Brindle called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1.2 Honouring the Land and Territory

L. Morris read the Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands

1.3 Approval of Agenda

#166-21S. Siddiqi and J. Baldwin

Be it resolved that the Special Education Advisory Committee approved the agenda for February 2, 2021.

Carried Unanimously

1.4 Minutes of January 5, 2021

#167-21 S. Lansley and D. Vandebossche

Be it resolved that the minutes for the meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee for January 5, 2021 be approved.

Carried Unanimously

2.0 Action

2.1 Introduction of New Members

A. Brindle welcomed our new Superintendent of Special Education, Colette Ruddock. A. Brindle announced that D. Woo and H. Shah will be stepping down as SEAC representatives of ABC. A. Brindle thanked them for their support on SEAC. Two new members of ABC will be joining SEAC. They will be announced at next month's SEAC meeting in March.

Director S. Miller joined the meeting at this point. Director Miller commented on the importance of the role of SEAC and all its members. Director Miller wanted to acknowledge and thank Superintendent M. Zonneveld for all of his work throughout his tenure as Superintendent of Student Services. This role is not an easy one, but very rewarding. Superintendent Zonneveld has always maintained a professional calmness and integrity. He is always empathetic and has provided wise counsel and understands the needs of his students, staff and community. Superintendent Zonneveld has made a difference to our student's with special needs. Director Miller welcomed Superintendent C. Ruddock to her new role as Superintendent of Special Education and is very happy and confident that she is taking over the reigns.

A. Brindle then asked all members of the Committee to introduce themselves and what their organization/role is with SEAC.

2.2 Special Education Plan

M. Zonneveld discussed the Special Education Plan (SPED) with all members. He explained the process of bringing the SPED Plan first to SEAC now as a first draft and then again in the spring for SEACs vote for their approval of the SPED Plan. After SEACs vote, the SPED Plan, as well as the budget will then go the Trustees for final approval in May.

3.0 SEAC Discussion/Question Period

S. Siddiqi asked about the synchronous learning in classes. Some parents had not received information about this. What was messaging to system? M. Zonneveld responded that on Jan 4th, we gave students in various programs (ie CPP, Project Search, etc.) the option of in person learning. Then, shortly after, we looked at other students with difficulty in virtual learning. We asked principals to consider the needs of their students and to reach out to families to discuss their options. S. Siddiqi will forward some emails around this issue to M. Zonneveld and C. Ruddock.

There was discussion amongst some members around the best practices that Associations use to bring forward their families concerns/requests to SEAC.

4.0 Communication to SEAC

4.1 Superintendent's Report

1. Virtual Learning Extension Update - Students in Community Pathways Programs, Project Search, Reach, CAPIS, Life Skills and Communication classes were given the option to attend in person or virtually beginning Jan. 4th. Students in regular classes and other self-contained classes, who have had great difficulty learning in the virtual environment, have also been given the in-person option. Principals have been making case by case decisions, being sure to weigh the ability of students to learn virtually with the Public Health expectations that we limit the number of students and staff coming into schools.

2. Model Change Numbers - Families of elementary students were again given the option at the beginning of January to move from in-person to virtual, or vice versa. Effective March 1, 853 students will be returning to in-person, while 569 students will move to virtual. The latest secondary model switch begins this week, with the opportunity to switch once more before the end of the school year. It's important to note that this becomes more and more difficult to do each quadmester as students need specific courses to complete their year and the timetabling options become very limited.

3. CCAT administration - As reported last month, Gr 4 students in virtual schools have been given the opportunity to write the CCAT7 in schools on the Feb 5 PA Day. This occurred once before on the Nov 27 PA Day. Parents were surveyed again and 84 students will be writing the CCAT7 on Feb 5, as supported by Public Health. 31 students/families want to write the assessment but not in schools with other students. These students/families will be given the option to write the assessment at home with virtual proctoring, have a WISC assessment completed in person by a Psych Ed Consultant, or to wait until schools fully return to in-person learning.

4. Department and Superintendent Changes - The following message was shared with SEAC earlier in January:

Student Well-Being and Mental Health Focus in MYP

Student Well-Being is a key pillar of our new HDSB 2020-2024 Multi-Year Plan. We recognize that enhancing the Well-Being and Mental Health of our students is key to supporting their overall wellness, success and achievement. To that end there will be several initiatives and changes that will occur to help our system focus on improving support for Student Well-Being and Mental Health at all levels of our organization.

New Student Well-Being Dept

One of the structural changes that will occur to support this direction is the creation of a new Student Well-Being Department. This department will be composed of staff who specifically support student mental health and well-being, and includes Child and Youth Counsellors, Social Workers and their PSSP Managers, as well as our Mental Health Lead and Well-Being Instructional Program Leader. This new department will form on Feb 8th, and I have been tasked with leading it as the Superintendent.

Special Education Services

Effective Feb 8th, Student Services will be renamed Special Education Services. All remaining staff will continue as members of this department with Colette Ruddock as the new Superintendent. Colette is excited about her new role and I know that you will welcome her to be part of this outstanding team.

The February SEAC Meeting will be my last as Superintendent of Student Services. It has been a pleasure working with you in serving students with special needs in the Halton District School Board. You continue to be strong advocates for students of all profiles, and a collaborative partner in our discussions and work at the SEAC table. I look forward to introducing Colette Ruddock on Feb 2nd, and to our final discussions regarding special education.

D. Woo asked about the communication around CCAT testing. M. Zonneveld responded that communication was sent to all grade 4 families virtually and it was extended twice to them for this opportunity. He commented on whether or not we open this up next year, or follow the problem solving process with students to support them.

4.2 Association Reports

A. Brindle reported the following on behalf of LDAHH: LDAHH is launching two new Executive Functioning programs shortly:

One program will be offered for students in Grades 8-12, twice a week for four weeks. This is focused on building intrinsic motivation and helping students identify which tools will help them from a variety that are presented. We will also be running a program for parents of students in the younger grades, helping them to reinforce successful strategies for at-home learning. Details on these programs are available at www.ldahh.ca

The Annual Educator's Conference put on by LDAHH each year is coming up on March 5th/6th. This is an online event with expert speakers from across Canada and the US. All speaker sessions will be recorded and available to registrants for 30 days, allowing them to access all content from the event. Tickets are currently on sale at an EARLY BIRD price which finishes on February 14th. We encourage anyone interested in education for students with learning disabilities to attend.

D. Vandebossche wanted to thank M. Zonneveld on behalf of the Association, parents and community of LDAHH as well as personally for all of his work and support while on SEAC.

S. Siddiqi reported that M. Brown will be stepping down as the alternate on SEAC representing Halton Down Syndrome Association. World Down Syndrome Day will be March 21, 2021. WSDS is having a contest and registration deadline is February 15, 2021.

4.3 Trustee Reports

H. Gerrits and T. Ehl Harrison reported on the following on behalf of the Trustees:

Two-way electronic participation at the Board and Committee through Q and A, and delegation process;

Recent letters to the Minister (adding an educator to the command table, inequity in high-speed internet);

Approved operational plan report (January, 2021);

Updated policy on naming schools to include "renaming" of schools;

Board is considering updates to - Privacy and Information Management Policy and French Language Policy at the February 3 meeting;

The budget development cycle is also beginning. Presentation/review with SEAC is scheduled for March/April timeframe; and

The Minister is scheduled to make an announcement tomorrow, about in person school reopening.

4.4 Committee Reports

- PIC – none
- Accessibility Coordinating Committee - none
- Equity and Inclusive Education Advisory Steering Committee – L. Morris reported that this Committee met recently and another meeting is planned for March, 2021.

5.0 Next Agenda/Order Paper

Halton Down's Syndrome presentation

LDAHH would like an overview of number of unidentified IEPs.

6.0 Adjournment

6.1 A. Brindle adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.