

Halton District School Board

HALTON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Special Education Advisory Committee - (Virtual Meeting)

Tuesday, January 5, 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)

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

Regrets: Mike Brown (Halton Down Syndrome Association); Judy Shiels (Voice); James Baldwin (Member at Large); Hetal Shah (Association for Bright Children)

Guest: Director S. Miller

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

#164-21 M. Shuttleworth and D. Vandebossche

Be it resolved that the Special Education Advisory Committee approved the agenda for January 5, 2021.

Carried Unanimously

1.4 Minutes of December 1, 2020

#165-21 J. Oliver and D. Vandebossche

Be it resolved that the minutes for the meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee for December 1, 2020 be approved.

Carried Unanimously

2.0 Action

2.1 Easter Seals Society Presentation

M. Dockeray presented a slideshow on the Easter Seals Society.

A. Brindle thanked M. Dockeray for her presentation this evening.

2.2 Development of Future Agenda Topics

A. Brindle asked all members for suggested topics for the future. Some topics raised were:

Overview of Community Pathways Program;

Bullying, racism and homophobic behaviours;

New census results – wait for research to bring this data as well;

Looking at all the specialized programming that address students' needs, supports for gifted, for communication classroom, and what these pieces are?;

Access for tech programs, summer camps, AT camps need to be addressed;

End of each meeting answers from last month;

M. Zonneveld shares results from all break-out sessions;

Halton Downs Syndrome offered to present in future;

ABC offered to present in future;

Autism Ontario offered to present in future;

Data on unidentified IEPs, where are we;

What changes are going to be made to schooling after Pandemic. School Board perspectives as it relates to students with special education needs;

How we can use SEACs organizations/associations to help with our advisory committee role and what types of concerns do SEAC organization members' have

3.0 SEAC Discussion/Question Period

S. Miller wanted to wish everyone the best and a Happy New Year and congratulated A. Brindle on her new role as SEAC Chair. D. Vandebossche wanted to congratulate Director Miller on his upcoming retirement. M. Dockeray congratulated Director Miller as well. M. Dockeray wanted to thank our Board on their communication with parents. It is always clear, direct and immediate and should be commended. S. Siddiqi thanked Director Miller, M. Zonneveld and our Trustees and wanted to echo what M. Dockeray said.

J. Oliver commented on the importance of communicating to our communities on how each SEAC Association works and how they tie into the HDSB. M. Zonneveld suggested that when an Association makes a presentation that it also be posted onto our SEAC page on our website.

4.0 Communication to SEAC

4.1 Superintendent's Report

1. Provincial Education Restrictions due to COVID - Effective January 4th the government has directed that all students attend school virtually. Elementary students will be returning to school in person learning on Jan 11th, and secondary students will do the same on Jan 25th. The Ministry of Education articulated that students who are unable to access learning through a remote platform may attend school in person. Students in Community Pathways Programs, Project Search, Reach, CAPIS, Life Skills and Communication classes have been given the option to attend in person or virtually. Students with special needs attending school virtually will have accommodations and modifications provided according to their IEPs, as appropriate.

2. CCAT Administration for Gr 4 Virtual Students - There are some Gr 4 students attending school virtually who did not write the CCAT7 on Nov 27. They will be offered again the opportunity to write this assessment on the Feb 5 PA day. As there will be significantly fewer students this time the locations may be at their home schools, or students may be congregated into central locations within

each area of the board. There may be a few students who cannot participate in this format for medical reasons. For these students we will give those families other options that may allow for them to be assessed to determine giftedness.

3. HDSB Human Rights Symposium - The HDSB is hosting its second annual Human Rights Symposium on Jan 22, 2020. The event, focusing on the Rights of the Child, will be held virtually this year, with keynote speakers Michel Chikwanine and Stephen Lewis. We will watch a brief video promoting this during the meeting.

4. Vice-Principal of Special Education/Student Services - Congratulations to Rebecca Newcombe who was appointed Principal of Aldershot HS effective Jan. 4, 2021. We thank her for all of her contributions to the work of our department in supporting students with special needs in the HDSB and wish her all the best as a leader in our system. We hope to have a new VP of Special Education/Student Services in place by early February. In the meantime we welcome back Margaret Kew who will be supporting our staff and schools.

D. Woo asked why are CCATs being done again. M. Zonneveld responded that we are not sure why the turn out was low. Approximately 1,400 Gr. 4 virtual students were registered. Over 800 chose to write in November. M. Zonneveld commented that language barriers may have been a factor. D. Woo would love to see the follow up on this. M. Zonneveld said that he will bring these results to SEAC when we have them.

4.2 Association Reports

Alison Brindle reported on the following the LDAHH: LDAHH has just opened registration for its 10th Annual Solutions for Learning Conference to be held online on March 5th and 6th. This event involves 4 renowned keynote speakers from across North America, as well as 12 unique breakout sessions arranged in four specialist topic streams. These speakers will offer valuable information for educators and parents on how to support students with learning disabilities, both academically and emotionally. Tickets are available at <https://ldahh.ca/annual-conference/>, and an early-bird discount is running until February 14th. LDAHH is also pleased to announce the start of its search for 5 Ambassadors for its Youth-to-Youth program funded by the Gaylea Foundation. These ambassadors, aged 15-24, will have learning disabilities and/or ADHD and will be willing to speak about their unique lived experience with learning disabilities to a wide variety of audiences. Ambassadors are being sought to represent the wide spectrum of life and success with an LD, and the different perspectives of various groups in our community. The Ambassadors will be in their position for one year and will be given essential training and staff support to host monthly speaker sessions for other youth with LDs. A \$500 gratitude payment and letters of reference will be provided to Ambassadors on completion of their term. Applications are open until Feb 14th through www.ldahh.ca

4.3 Trustee Reports

On behalf of my Trustee colleagues, I wish you and yours a very Happy and Healthy New Year 2021.

Following Trustees' Striking Committee 2021 Report and the approval of the SEAC Trustees Membership Report, Trustees Ehl Harrison and Gerrits will assume voting member roles on SEAC and Trustees Oliver and Shuttleworth will assume alternate member role.

In November 2020, the Board received a memo from Minister Lecce to inform that "in response to the current public health situation in Ontario and school board/association requests, amendments have been made to Ontario Regulation 463/97 (Electronic Meetings and Meeting Attendance) under the *Education Act* to allow for the resumption of fully electronic meetings effective immediately and until November 30, 2021".

Several amendments were outlined, with one of particular interest to the general public. This amendment includes “a new requirement for boards to provide members of the public with participatory electronic access to open board/committee meetings (i.e., two-way means of participation) effective Feb. 1, 2021. When in-person meetings resume, boards will be required to provide both in-person and electronic means for public participation, as set out in O.Reg. 463/97”.

On January 2, 2021, Minister Lecce shared a letter with parents. One of the sections in that letter is Financial Relief for Parents. Under the *Support for Learners* program, parents/guardians of children aged 0 to 12 may apply to receive \$200 support per child and \$250 per child up to age 21 with special needs. The deadline is February 8, 2021. This program has now been expanded to include students in high school, recognizing added costs for technology and internet. Families with students aged 13 to grade 12 may apply for this starting January 11, 2021 until February 8, 2021. This program will cover \$200 per each child up to grade 12, including students in secondary school who are over the age of 18, and \$250 per child or youth with special needs, up to age 21.

4.4 Committee Reports

- PIC – none
- Accessibility Coordinating Committee - none
- Equity and Inclusive Education Advisory Steering Committee – none

5.0 Next Agenda/Order Paper

M. Zonneveld mentioned that Community Living for Burlington will be a new Association on our SEAC Committee and will be included at next month’s meeting.

Possible items for future agenda topics listed in Action Item 2.2 above.

6.0 Adjournment

6.1 A. Brindle adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.