

Halton District School Board

HALTON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Special Education Advisory Committee - (Virtual Meeting)

Tuesday, March 2, 2021, 7pm

MINUTES

Present: Alison Brindle (Learning Disabilities Association of Halton/Hamilton); Margo Shuttleworth (Trustee); Lucille Morris (Member at Large); Tracey Ehl Harrison (Trustee); 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); Joanna Oliver (Trustee); James Baldwin (Member at Large); Candice Keem (Community Living Burlington); Yalin Gorica (Association for Bright Children); Jenn Heidstra (Association for Bright Children); Diane Vandenbossche (Learning Disabilities Association of Halton/Hamilton)

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

Regrets: Heather Gerrits (Trustee); Judy Shiels (Voice)

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

A. Brindle read the Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands

1.3 Approval of Agenda

#168-21 J. Baldwin and S. Siddiqi

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

Carried Unanimously

1.4 Minutes of February 2, 2021

#169-21 D. Miller and J. Baldwin

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

Carried Unanimously

2.0 Action

2.1 A presentation was made by Superintendents R. Eatough and S. Podrebarac on Equity and Safe Schools in Context. Several members asked questions during and after the presentation.

2.2 M. Marshall, Principal of Equity and Diversity and S. Taha, Superintendent of Human Resources presented a report on Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). After the presentation, there was an opportunity for questions.

2.3 A very informative presentation was made by S. Siddiqi on behalf of Halton Down Syndrome Association.

3.0 SEAC Discussion/Question Period

None

4.0 Communication to SEAC

4.1 Superintendent's Report - March 2, 2021

1. **Welcome** to our newest members of SEAC - ABC representatives Yalin Gorica and Jenn Heidstra. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the former ABC reps - Deidre Woo and Hetal Shaw for their contributions. We recognize your work on SEAC is volunteer and in-service to our students with special needs. So I would like to express my gratitude, as well as on behalf of the Board
2. **Vice Principal - Special Education Services** - Congratulations to Stacey Farrell-Bangerter in her new appointment as vice principal in Special Education Services. Stacey joins us from Acton District High School and previously from Georgetown District High School, where she was instrumental in supporting students in the Community Pathway Program.
3. **Model change numbers: Elementary** - March 1st was the first day of the model switch for elementary students. In this round, we had more students return to in-person learning (Virtual to In Person n = 853; In Person to Virtual n = 569); which resulted in some class reorganizations in "bricks and mortar" schools, as well as virtual schools.
4. **Student Census** - The HDSB has begun the collection of identity-based data through the Student Census. All school boards in Ontario are required by the [Anti-Racism Act, 2017](#) and [Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan](#) to gather and report identity-based data. The data from the Student Census will help the HDSB and our schools to:
 - fully understand the needs of all students and families to support student success and well-being
 - identify and eliminate discriminatory practices, systemic barriers and bias in order to ensure equitable opportunities and outcomes
 - and allocate resources to support students and programs where the need is greatest.

The Student Census will be conducted from January to May 2021. Students in Grade 4 to Grade 12 will receive an email to their HDSB account containing a secure link to the Student Census for electronic completion during class time. The Student Census will take approximately one class period to complete and will include questions that ask students about their identities (e.g., race, religion/faith, gender identity, etc.) and their experiences in school (e.g., safety, sense of belonging, extra-curricular activities, etc.).

For students in Kindergarten to Grade 3, parent(s)/guardian(s) will receive an invitation through School Messenger to complete the census on behalf of their child.

5. **HDSB Human Rights Equity Advisory Committee** - A new advisory committee is being formed to provide input on the scope and direction of HDSB initiatives to promote human rights and equity. Modeled after SEAC, this advisory committee will include a similar membership composition with trustees, community members/parents/guardians and staff. The call for representatives has just closed and the Equity Department will be working through the selection process.
6. **March Break Timing** - The spring break has now been moved to the week of April 12th. This will result in some adjustments to our timelines for planning for next year (such as posting of internal teaching positions). For secondary students, the quadmester change date was adjusted by one week and, for elementary students, there is no impact on their school year calendar (e.g., Term 2 start date).
7. **Spring Break / Summer Assessments** - We have received approval to access funds to conduct psychoeducational assessments, as well as speech and language assessments, over the upcoming spring break and summer. These additional funds are intended to reduce the wait times for assessments; Managers are in the process of identifying staff to conduct assessments and planning sites to complete the work. The number of assessments that are anticipated to be completed is currently being determined.
8. **Unidentified IEPs** - At the request of LDAHH, an overview of the number of IEPs identified and unidentified through an IPRC can be found [here](#). Some challenges with the numbers -we are working on getting to the bottom of the issue. This report reflects 441 IEPs short than what we know we have in our system from another source/report. Not sure why the detailed report shows fewer than the overall report...this gives you a snapshot, albeit with some needed corrections, to the number of IEPs, as well as IPRC identifications and unidentified IEPs.
9. **Summer Learning** - The Ministry of Education has confirmed that funding will be provided for summer learning programs, as well as Summer School programs. Special Education Services and Schools Programs are developing plans for these programs which may occur virtually, in-person or a combination of both models. We have also received permission to carry our After School Skills Development Program for students with Autism (ASSDP) funding into the summer and we are working on the program delivery model similar to what was presented to SEAC last year. More information on summer learning and programs will be provided in the coming months.

4.2 Association Reports

A. Brindle reported on the following: LDAHH's 10th Annual Educator's Conference will be taking place this week on Friday and Saturday, March 5th/6th. We have 16 amazing speakers lined up and we encourage anyone interested in education for students with learning disabilities to attend or register to receive exclusive access to the recordings. LDAHH is also proud to announce that it is launching a new summer camp for students with learning disabilities. These will offer literacy and numeracy support in the mornings as well as social skills training and fun themed activities in the afternoon. We offer a safe, caring place for students with LDs to interact with peers facing the same struggles. Information is available on our website www.ldahh.ca.

M. Dockeray reported that March is Easter Seals Month.

4.3 Trustee Reports

T. Ehl Harrison reported the following:

Recent Trustee Professional Development: Intensive Human Rights Program for School Board Leaders (2 sessions, York University / Osgoode Law School); Virtual Learning Session; OPSBA Speakers Series (2 sessions, wellbeing); Mohawk Institute Residential School Virtual Tour.

Search for the next HDSB Director has commenced and an executive search firm has been retained. They are starting with stakeholder consultation, including interviews and a community survey to help build the position profile that reflects the dreams of the community. This engagement will include the SEAC Chair (or designate).

Everyone is encouraged to participate in the budget consultation ([survey here](#)) before March 5, or to reach out with priority areas.

Ministry has indicated that Boards will be funded on a "normal year basis".

The first HDSB [Student Census](#) is ongoing (January to early spring). The Student Census is voluntary as required by the [Anti-Racism Act, 2017](#) and [Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan](#) to gather and report identity-based data. Students from grades 4-12 will independently fill out the census. Parents/guardians of Kindergarten to Grade 3 students have/will receive an email containing a link to complete the Student Census on behalf of their children.

Census information is available in the following languages:

[العربية \(Arabic\)](#), [Français \(French\)](#), [हिंदी \(Hindi\)](#), [ਪੰਜਾਬੀ \(Punjabi\)](#), [中文 \(Simplified Chinese\)](#), [Español \(Spanish\)](#), [اردو \(Urdu\)](#)

Congratulations to secondary school students Vanditha Widyalkara and Kacy Bao who were elected on February 25, 2021 and will be the Board's Student Trustees for the 2021-2022 school year. The election was conducted online and more than 3,000 students voted, a record number for the HDSB.

Seen something that inspires you? The [Inspire Award](#) is given to an individual or group that is formally or informally associated with the Halton District School Board, who support our students and their achievements through exemplary caring, initiative, innovation and creativity.

4.4 Committee Reports

- PIC – none
- Accessibility Coordinating Committee – M. Shuttleworth reported that the next meeting is March 11, 2021.
- Equity and Inclusive Education Advisory Steering Committee - none

5.0 Next Agenda/Order Paper

Send out information to SEAC members on roles and expectations of above Committees and any new Committees being formed.

6.0 Adjournment

6.1 A. Brindle adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.