

Halton District School Board



HALTON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Special Education Advisory Committee - (Virtual Meeting)

Tuesday, May 4, 2021, 7pm

MINUTES

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

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

Regrets: Alison Brindle (Learning Disabilities Association of Halton/Hamilton); Sophia Siddiqi (Halton Down Syndrome Association); Rebecca Hurren (Halton Down Syndrome Association); Judy Shiels (Voice); James Baldwin (Member at Large); Jenn Heidstra (Association for Bright Children)

Guests: Stacey Farrell Bangerter, Vice-Principal, Special Education Department

1.0 Opening

1.1 Welcome and Call to Order

L. Morris 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

#172-21 M. Shuttleworth and Y. Gorica

Be it resolved that the Special Education Advisory Committee approved the agenda for May 4, 2021.

Carried Unanimously

1.4 Minutes of April 6, 2021

#173-21 T. Ehl Harrison and D. Vandebossche

Be it resolved that the minutes for the meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee for April 6, 2021 be approved.

Carried Unanimously

2.0 Action

2.1 Key Learnings from the Pandemic - 3 break-out rooms were held to discuss key learnings from the pandemic as well as an opportunity for SEAC members to provide their input regarding the budget.

All responses from these break-out rooms will be shared with SEAC as well as a pdf of a slideshow entitled "Lessons from the Pandemic".

2.3 SEAC voted on the Special Education Plan. L. Morris then proceeded with the vote and asked each Association whether or not they support the Special Education Plan. The Learning Disabilities Association of Halton/Hamilton (LDAHH) was the only Association that did not support the Special Education Plan.

3.0 SEAC Discussion/Question Period

There was a discussion amongst members around why LDAHH did not support the Plan.

4.0 Communication to SEAC

4.1 Superintendent's Report - May 4, 2021

- **May is Speech and Hearing Month** - This month is to raise awareness about communication health and those who have difficulty communicating. To learn more, visit [Speech-Language and Audiology Canada](#).
- **Education Week** - This week is Education Week -a week to celebrate and recognize our students and families, staff and the strength of our system. The Board has virtual events or key messages planned throughout the week, including Student Excellence where we honour a student from each elementary and secondary school.
- **Parent Sessions** - Continuing this week, the Student Well-being Department is hosting a series of information sessions on a variety of topics related to mental health, parenting and well-being. More information on the sessions planned throughout the month and registration can be found on the [Mental Health and Well-Being](#) page on our website.
- **School Closure and In-Person Learning for Students with Significant Special Education Needs** - With the most recent Ministry announcement for school closures, the vast majority of our students are again learning remotely. Synchronous learning is in place, following the regular school day/timetable-our staff have transitioned quickly and adeptly to this model this time around. Students with special education needs are receiving supports and accommodations appropriate to their learning needs within this model. Elementary students in self contained Life Skills and Communication classes, as well as secondary students in the Community Pathway Program have been provided the opportunity to continue learning in person, due to their special education needs and challenges with accessing the learning in the remote model. In addition, students with significant special education needs in the regular class who meet the criteria and are unable to access the learning in the remote model have also been provided the opportunity to learn in person. We have teachers, educational assistants, administrators and office staff working at many of our school sites to ensure staff and students are well-supported during this period of in-person learning. We appreciate the support and dedication of staff during these challenging times.

We are now in the final stretch, with Quadmester 4 now underway for secondary students. Plans for year end traditions and celebrations are in development - these will be compliant with Public Health measures and developed by the schools.

- **Special Athletes Track Meet** - Plans are underway for this year's Special Athletes Track Meet. Of course, due to the pandemic, this event will look quite different than typical years with a virtual component each day, as well as in school/home activities that can be done as a class (synchronously) or individually (asynchronously). The Meet will run June 14-18.
- **Communicative Disorders Assistant (CDA)** - We are excited to introduce this new role into our system as part of the pilot of the Structured Learning Class. A CDA has a specialized diploma in communicative disorders and works under the supervision of a Speech-Language Pathologist to provide direct intervention on speech and language. 4 CDAs will be assigned to the Structured Learning Classes, as a part of this pilot. This is a cost-neutral addition to our system, as these classes were assigned an educational assistant in the last pilot; in this pilot, the CDA will be the assigned support for the class. In addition, the students selected for these classes would have likely also received EA support in the regular classroom.
- Special Education Services has committed to bringing two presentations to SEAC in the fall of the 2021-22 school year in response to requests made:
 - LDAHH is seeking information on the continuity of service for students with learning difficulties and/or disability, specifically in Kindergarten to Grade 3. Special Education Services will bring a presentation in 2021-22 school year on service continuity K-12, with a focus on supports and interventions in primary years, as well as reading intervention for students with a learning disability led by the Itinerant Resource Teachers.
 - ABC Halton is seeking clarification on the Problem Solving Pathway and how it meets the needs of students in the primary years who are highly able and/or identified gifted, and how parents/guardians may make an informed decision regarding placement. Special Education Services will bring a presentation on the Problem Solving Pathway and how this process is used to navigate supports and services for students.

4.2 Association Reports

None

4.3 Trustee Reports

H. Gerrits and T. Ehl Harrison reported that Trustees continue to advocate for new schools in South Milton and North Oakville. The new secondary school in South Milton was named Elsie MacGill .

Hiring processes for 3 Superintendents and Director, taking place over the next couple of weeks.

Trustee PD - mending the chasm has been ongoing over past few months.

Over the next month, the budget will be a big focus - grants for student needs released today - digesting what is contained, looks like there will be covid funding for another year - continued support for continuation of remote learning, mental health supports, student re-engagement.

Trustee Education Action 2.0 - regarding leaked proposal for enhanced online and virtual learning largely centralized.

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 - L. Morris reported that they met in March. L. Morris asked 2 questions: 1. Is there information yet across Halton regarding the summer camp programs for students with exceptionalities? 2. What is the accessibility of testing components and identification - (Grade 4 testing changes in the identification processes?)
- Equity and Inclusive Education Advisory Steering Committee - none

5.0 Next Agenda/Order Paper

Presentation from Autism Ontario

Presentation from Voice

Presentation from 2 new programs for Kindergarten and Gr. 1 - requested by D.

Vandenbossche (fall 2021)

Presentation re 5 itinerant teachers and targeting supports for students to K-8 with learning disabilities (fall of 2021)

School Programs and Special Education summer opportunities for staff on interventions for students (fall 2021)

6.0 Adjournment

6.1 L. Morris adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.