

Halton District School Board

HALTON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Special Education Advisory Committee - (Virtual Meeting)

Tuesday, November 3, 2020, 7pm

MINUTES

Present: Joanna Oliver (Trustee); 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); Melissa Dockeray (Easter Seals Society); Sophia Siddiqi (Halton Down Syndrome Association); Diane Miller (Member at Large); Diane Vandebossche (Learning Disabilities Association of Halton/Hamilton); James Baldwin (Member at Large)

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

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

1.0 Opening

1.1 Welcome and Call to Order

L. Morris called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm

1.2 Honouring the Land and Territory

L. Morris read the Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands

1.3 Approval of Agenda

#160-21 S. Siddiqi and J. Baldwin

Be it resolved that the Special Education Advisory Committee approved the agenda for November 3, 2020.

Carried Unanimously

1.4 Minutes of October 6, 2020

#161-21 M. Dockeray and D. Woo

Be it resolved that the minutes for the meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee for October 6, 2020 be approved.

Carried Unanimously

2.0 Action

2.1 Equity Action Plan Presentation - R. Eatough, Superintendent, Equity & Communications, M. Marshall, Principal, Equity and Diversity and J. Amoah, Human Rights and Equity Advisor shared a presentation with SEAC. There was a Q&A after the presentation. M. Zonneveld thanked R. Eatough, M. Marshall and J. Amoah for their tremendous work and support on this.

2.2 Assistive Technology Presentation - A slideshow was presented by J. Sackville, S. Gillivet-O'Neill, T. Van Loon, E. Jeronimo and J. Kostanowicz. M. Zonneveld and S. Marks, Principal, Student Services wanted to thank our Assistive Technology team, including L. Rhodes, our SEA Inventory Control Manager, our IT Department and C. Howard, Manager, Student Services. At this point, 3 break-out sessions were held for SEAC members in order to gain feedback from SEAC on our Board's Assistive Technology processes and procedures. M. Zonneveld confirmed that we will consolidate all of the break-out feedback and share with SEAC in the future.

3.0 SEAC Discussion/Question Period

None

4.0 Communication to SEAC

4.1 Superintendent's Report – November 3, 2020

1. CCAT Administration for Gr 4 Virtual Students - We administer the CCAT to Gr 4 students each year to gain a better understanding of their cognitive abilities, and to determine which students qualify, or need further assessment, to determine if they meet the criteria to be identified as gifted. 3315 Gr 4 students attending in-person schools just finished writing the test, which leaves 1453 virtual students to write the test. There will also be a few students who are not attending the in-person schools and are doing asynchronous work, who will also be given the opportunity to write the test.

After considering several options, which include writing the test in high schools in the afternoon or on a Saturday, writing an American virtual version of the test with no Canadian norms and no proctoring, distributing the paper test and having students write it with virtual proctoring, and delaying the assessment for a year or more, we have decided that the CCAT will be administered to virtual Gr 4 students on the Nov 27 PA Day in their home schools.

Here are some of the details of how the test will be administered:

- administered on Nov 27 PA day
- LTO teachers and Student Services staff will proctor in each room
- 3 x 45 min time slots with breaks in between
- schools to determine which rooms will be used
- 20 students maximum per cohort/room
- physical distancing between seats
- masking while indoors
- staggered entry and exit by cohort and with physical distancing
- hand hygiene practices upon entry and when handing out papers
- outdoor break with cohort (can remove masks at this time)
- classrooms/rooms to be thoroughly cleaned both Thurs and Fri
- all student materials removed from on top of and in desks
- safety and hygiene protocols will be provided to students prior to day of testing
- staff trained in administration of the test

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.

2. Psych Assessments Update - Our process for making referrals and conducting psychological assessments occurred as normal last year until the beginning of Covid. After that time referrals continued to come forward, although at a slower pace, but assessments were not completed as schools were closed. SRTs and IPRCs continued virtually last spring, with most placement requests being for self-contained, and more resource support placements coming forward this fall, which is the same most years. There are fewer students on the waitlist now compared to this time last year as there were 628 last Oct and there are now 569, resulting in a current wait time of approximately 10-12 months. Schools continue to bring students forward for assessments, and can prioritize their list as needed.

In 2018/19, utilizing the Primary Gifted Nomination Process, 158 students were recommended for a psych assessment, with 59 meeting criteria. In 2019/20, utilizing the Problem Solving Pathway, 9 students were recommended, with 1 meeting criteria for giftedness.

3. Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence - Two Halton teachers have recently been honoured with the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching excellence. [Stacey Faulconer](#) teaches a self-contained LD class at Lakeshore PS, and [Richard Bernard](#) teaches Gr 8 at River Oaks PS. We are thrilled that Stacey and Richard have been recognized for the incredible learning opportunities they provide for their students, and we are so fortunate that they are two of many incredible educators in Halton.

4.2 Association Reports

Alison Brindle reported the following: LDAHH has launched some exciting new programs which are available for registration on it's website (www.ldahh.ca). These include social skills and self-advocacy training. All are designed for students with learning disabilities. We are also running keyboarding, assistive technology training and a one-on-one reading program for struggling readers aged 6-12 years old.

4.3 Trustee Reports

M. Shuttleworth reported on the following:

The final version of our multi year plan has been created and being presented to the board at tomorrow's meeting for final approval. The overall aim of the MYP is to guide decisions and allocation of resources to support student's achievement and well-being. Our previous MYP came to an end in August 2020 and after a couple of delays due to unforeseen circumstances, this new plan has been created. In creating the plan, the board gained feedback from many of the key stakeholders including:

- Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)
- Indigenous and Racialized Educator Network (IREN)
- Racialized Student Group
- Student Senate
- Disengaged Student Group
- A non-English speaking parent group
- Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) group from one high school; and of course
- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

From this feedback it was determined that the MYP would be a high level document that focused our efforts over the next four years under five interweaving themes, namely:

- Equity and Inclusion
- Mental Health and Well being
- Learning and Achievement
- Environmental Leadership
- Indigenous Perspectives and Awareness

Through this multi year plan, once approved, staff will move forward with their operational plans which will drive work for this school year.

Another action we as Trustees have embarked upon is looking at some of the inequities that have been highlighted through the impact of this pandemic and how we can try to break down some of the barriers both families and students face.

We started off by writing a letter to the Minister of Education back in July asking for some critical reflection in how Ontario's publicly funded education system can "build back better" in the wake of this COVID-19 Pandemic. As we have yet to hear back from them, we have now begun to look at how we can use this new found knowledge to develop big picture, innovative opportunities. We are aiming to have a plan in place by the end of 2020. Although we are in the early stages of these discussions, we have begun to look at Whats, Whens and Whos that may provide partnerships, coordinate forums and approaches in developing opportunities in moving forward and making a difference.

Finally, at our board meeting tomorrow we will welcome Dr Meghani who will present information and answer questions surrounding the partnerships between public health and schools in response to the covid pandemic.

J. Oliver reported the following: Student Trustees Vandy Widyalankara and Evan Taylor hosted their very first Student Senate meeting on October 27th. This meeting was held via videoconference and had a great turnout. At this first meeting, senators had an opportunity to introduce themselves and receive a presentation about the role of the Senate and the role of a Senator. At the joint session, Michelle Bates, the Mental Health Lead, delivered a great presentation about mental health, mental illness and mental health resources available to students. Senators recognized the tremendous importance of this information and were already brainstorming about how to make this information available to their own school communities. The Mental Health Committee is welcoming senate representation and these student representatives will be selected in short order.

Trustees received information from Shift Your Thinking organization, which is a Canadian charity that supports families and professionals caring for kids that have learning differences, ADHD, dyslexia and mental health challenges such as anxiety. This year, they are hosting a free virtual summit starting November 13th and all are welcomed. Information can be found at:

<https://www.shiftyourthinkingld.com/summit>

At this point in the meeting, M. Zonneveld confirmed that a new alternate for Easter Seals, Sarah Lansley, has been nominated. This nomination needs to go to the Board on Wednesday, November 4, 2020 and needs to be approved. If approved, she will become the official alternate for Easter Seals.

4.4 Committee Reports

- PIC – none
- Accessibility Coordinating Committee - none
- Equity and Inclusive Education Advisory Steering Committee – none
- Nelson/Robert Bateman HS Integration Steering Committee – none
- Central/Robert Bateman HS IB Program Integration Steering Committee – none

5.0 Next Agenda/Order Paper

none

6.0 Adjournment

6.1 L. Morris adjourned the meeting at 9:36 pm.