

Halton District School Board



HALTON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Special Education Advisory Committee - (Virtual Meeting)

Tuesday, October 5, 2021, 7pm

MINUTES

- Present:** Alison Brindle (Learning Disabilities Association of Halton/Hamilton); Sophia Siddiqi (Halton Down Syndrome Association); Lucille Morris (Member at Large); Tracey Ehl Harrison (Trustee); Joanna Oliver (Trustee); Yalin Gorica (Association for Bright Children); Diane Vandebossche (Learning Disabilities Association of Halton/Hamilton); Melissa Dockeray (Easter Seals Society); James Baldwin (Member at Large); Jenn Heidstra (Association for Bright Children); Heather Gerrits (Trustee); Diane Miller (Member at Large); Margo Shuttleworth (Trustee); Sarah Lansley (Easter Seals Society); Erin Sproule (Voice for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children)
- Staff:** Colette Ruddock (Superintendent); Sean Marks (Principal); Lorna Goodrow (Administrator)
- Regrets:** Candice Keem (Community Living Burlington); Rebecca Hurren (Halton Down Syndrome Association); Lisa Cameron (Autism Ontario)
- Guests:** Curtis Ennis, Director of Education

1.0 Opening

1.1 Welcome and Call to Order

A. Brindle called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

1.2 Honouring the Land and Territory

A. Brindle read the Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands

1.3 Approval of Agenda

#178-22 T. Ehl Harrison and S. Lansley

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

Carried Unanimously

1.4 Minutes of September 14, 2021

#179-22 J. Heidstra and A. Brindle

Be it resolved that the minutes for the meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee for September 14, 2021 be approved.

Carried Unanimously

At this point A. Brindle introduced our new Director of Education, Curtis Ennis. Director Ennis expressed his gratitude for all the work that SEAC does with our Board.

2.0 Action

2.1 Student Well-Being Presentation

Superintendent D. Barnes introduced himself as the new Superintendent of the Student Well-Being Department. He then introduced Rebecca Mantynen, Professional Manager and Michelle McCann, Instructional Program Leader, who are both part of the Student Well-Being Department. They made a presentation on Student Well-Being and summer programs. There was an opportunity for questions during and after the presentation. Superintendent Barnes thanked Rebecca and Michelle for their presentation.

3.0 SEAC Discussion/Question Period

Y. Gorica wanted to confirm the procedure after a minority report has been submitted regarding the Special Education Plan (SPED). C. Ruddock confirmed that minority reports were included with the Special Education Plan for the Board of Trustees vote on the plan in June. The Chair of the Board provided a response to each minority report, which were also appended to the Special Education Plan and circulated to SEAC members in June. The posted version of the Special Education Plan also reflects these appendages.

4.0 Communication to SEAC

4.1 Superintendent's Report

1. October is **Learning Disabilities Awareness Month**, a month to bring awareness to those with LD and the supports to help them reach their potential. Today is also **World Teachers' Day** and an opportunity to recognize all teachers who work to support our students with special education needs.
2. **Welcome to Erin!** - We welcome Erin Sproule to SEAC. He joins as the new representative for VOICE.
3. **SEAC New Member Training** - rescheduled for Tuesday, October 12 at 7pm via Google Meet. Lorna will send out an invite to those who have confirmed and the session will be recorded for those who are unable to join.
4. **Assessment wait times** - As a follow up from the request at the September SEAC meeting, our waitlist for a Speech Language Assessment or a Psychoeducational Assessment is 9 to 12 months.
5. **Elementary Reorganization Date** - The model switch date for elementary schools, as well as our usual September reorganization of classes to ensure compliance with Ministry class size mandates, occurs on Tuesday, October 12. SES has reviewed all of our student placements and adjusted EA allocations accordingly. SES staff are working with sending and receiving schools to ensure that a change in location for a student with special education needs is supported with a transition plan. Due to shifting enrollments, we have added an additional self-contained Learning Disabilities class for virtual students.
6. **CCAT7 Administration** - The process for the administration of the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test begins in October. Families of Gr. 4 students attending in-person schools have been notified of the process and students will participate in the assessment in the coming weeks. Families of Gr. 4 students attending virtually have been provided the opportunity to write the test from home and proctored by staff through Google Meet.
7. **Project SEARCH Mentor Board** - We are excited to be selected by the Ministry of Education as a mentor board. This year, we will mentor 16 other districts across the province who are implementing Project SEARCH in their respective boards.

4.2 Association Reports

October is Learning Disabilities Awareness Month. We are very grateful to the Mayors of Oakville, Milton and Hamilton for making this proclamation in their cities. We thank them for their support and awareness of the issues facing members of our community.

In recognition of LD Awareness month, LDAHH is running two free parent workshops this month; one tonight on Stress Management and one on Oct 14th on 'How to Create an IEP that Works'. Registration is through [Events - Learning Disabilities Association of Hamilton \(ldahh.ca\)](#).

We also continue to offer our literacy, numeracy and social skills programs and are preparing to launch our Self-Advocacy program, SOAR. For more information, head to www.ldahh.ca

4.3 Trustee Reports

Trustee Ehl Harrison and Trustee Gerrits reported the following: We started off the last meeting with the unveiling of a wonderful piece of artwork that now hangs in the JWS boardroom. It represents the Board's multi year plan. The incredible work of art was done by an HDSB student artist, Min Yi Liu.

The Board approved the recommendation from Superintendent Ruddock of the appointment of Erin Sproule, who is representative of Voice to SEAC - welcome Erin!

Trustees' Rocha and Shuttleworth brought a report about aligning the creation of the annual school year calendar with the values of equity and inclusion in the Multi Year Plan. This motion was carried unanimously. *"Be it resolved that the Halton District School Board review any existing policy and/or governance procedure related to school year calendar creation to ensure they align with the Equity & Inclusion commitment of our Multi Year Plan which aims to champion supportive and inclusive practices."*

The Long Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP) was discussed at length and hasn't yet been finalized. This is the Board's planning tool which helps to identify areas of student growth and decline over the next decade and plan infrastructure to best accommodate this. It will be coming back to the Board in a few weeks. There is an [online form](#) available until tomorrow. Your comments are invited.

We received a quarterly Capital Update, which provided progress on the new Elsie MacGill Secondary School (EMSS), two new elementary schools in Milton, and a new secondary school being planned in Oakville. Other projects include a Child Care at Frontenac PS, completion of the work at Nelson related to the Pupil Accommodation Review. HDSB has undertaken a climate ready school project at (CRS) Irma Coulson PS. The CRS project is awaiting the final Minor Site Plan Variance and Building Permit. Lastly, the Board has implemented 143 projects under the COVID Resilient Infrastructure Stream, including many outdoor classrooms. This is federal funding. Some projects have been completed, while others are in the starting stages.

On September 23rd, Trustee Heather Gerrits went to visit the construction site of EMSS. It is well on its way and might be ready for partial occupancy by February. It is innovative and unlike any school in Halton. Of special note and interest to SEAC, the Community Pathways Programs classrooms are set right in the middle/front of the school with walkouts to the outdoor patios, permanent cement planters for growing plants and vegetables. The whole school is laid out in a unique way for all levels of inclusive learning.

The Renaming of Ryerson Public School committee will have its first meeting tomorrow, October 6, 2021.

October 6 meeting

At the meeting tomorrow night, there is [a report](#) on the Operational Plan. Each spring, the Board approves an Operational Plan for the following school year which outlines actions and strategies to support the board's strategic Multi-Year Plan priorities. This report provides an update on progress made during the 2020-2021 Operational Plan.

The Suspensions, Expulsions and Behavioural Intervention Strategies [Annual Report](#) will be coming forward. "The data continues to reflect a significant reduction in suspensions from Pre-COVID years. The extended periods of virtual learning along with the secondary quadmester model, which strictly limited unsupervised time in schools, contributed to especially reduced numbers in our secondary suspensions.

The Ombudsman [Annual Report](#) is also coming forward. "The 2020-2021 Ombudsman report stated that during this time period there were 569 complaints related to school boards, 10 of which referenced the Halton District School Board. When the Ombudsman's office receives a complaint, they have several avenues by which to deal with the complaint including, but not limited to, providing advice to the complainant, contacting the school board to receive information related to the complaint and/or initiating a full investigation. During this reporting period, the HDSB did not have any recorded contacts with the Ombudsman's Office. Staff have no information regarding the 10 reported complaints to the Ombudsman's Office."

4.4 Committee Reports

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

A. Brindle reported that a request was made by Dean Barnes, Superintendent of Student Well-Being, that a representative from SEAC would be welcomed on the The Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy Steering and Advisory Committee. Yalin Gorica volunteered to sit on this committee.

5.0 Next Agenda/Order Paper

Problem Solving Pathway presentation
Autism Ontario presentation
Project SEARCH update
How are students supported that are impacted by concussions

Question from the Public:

J. Oliver reported that there was a question from the public concerning ADHD and why this is not included in the Ministry's Categories of Exceptionalities. J. Oliver suggested SEAC write a letter to the Ministry to advocate for this inclusion. C. Ruddock will bring additional information regarding staff training and supports for students with ADHD to our next SEAC meeting.

6.0 Adjournment

6.1 A. Brindle adjourned the meeting at 9:27 p.m.