

HALTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, September 19, 2005
7:30 p.m. – Main Board Room

Members/Alternates present:

Mrs. R.A. McAuley; Mrs. M. Bursey; Ms. M. Hastings;
Mr. David Goch; Mrs. A.A. LeMay; Mrs. L. Kovalchek;
Mrs. L. Stanciulescu; Mrs. R. Quesnel

Members absent:

Ms. H. Ross; Mr. B. Quesnel; Mrs. M. Forhan; Mr. C. Learn;
Ms. G. Pearce

Staff present:

Mr. G. Mahoney, Superintendent, Special Education Services
Ms. Gail Stelter, Principal
Mrs. V. Goodwin-Duncan, Mrs. K. Slomka
Special Education Consultants
Ms. O. Dilay, Ms. E. Sweeney-Hurd, Mrs. C. Rideski and Mr. P. Harper
Itinerant SERTs, Central Office
Ms. Stephanie Strong, Manager, Employee Relations

Also present:

Ms. Luisa Volkers, Member, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children

Recording Secretary:

C. Quesnel

1. Call to Order

1.1 Opening Prayer and Welcome

The meeting opened with a prayer.

2. Approval of the Agenda

RECOMMENDATION	<i>Moved by: A.A. LeMay</i>
	<i>Seconded by: R. Quesnel</i>
THAT, the agenda for the September 19th, 2005 SEAC meeting be approved as presented.	
CARRIED	

3. Actions to be taken

3.1 Approval of SEAC Minutes – June 20th, 2005

RECOMMENDATION	<i>Moved by: M. Bursey</i>
	<i>Seconded by: D. Goch</i>
THAT, the minutes for the June 20th, 2005 SEAC meeting be approved as presented.	
CARRIED	

With reference to future agenda items, the Board's written response to the Minority Reports going out to respective associations will be formulated during the fall and placed on the agenda for SEAC's information.

4. Presentation

4.1 Annual Accessibility Plan September 2005 – August 2006

Stephanie Strong, Manager, Employee Relations

The Board's revision of its Annual Accessibility Plan was presented in detail to members of SEAC and questions were answered. Changes are currently being made at the communication of information level. The Board's Information Technology Services are working on providing, on the Board's StaffNet and its public Website, alternative formats for accessing the plan.

With respect to the Attitudinal Barriers, knowledge and sensitivity training workshops are being provided to Board staff and members of the community on how to deal with students and co-workers with exceptionalities, including mental health issues.

The consultation process was discussed - the planning committee included members from all sectors, including persons with disabilities. In the area of policy-making, the Board has a comprehensive process in creating a policy – a rigorous review involving three readings from various stakeholders.

The previous legislation under which the Accessibility Plan was crafted has been replaced with Bill 118 – *The Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act 2005*. The new legislation will have tighter guidelines around the consultation process and reporting to the Ministry. Bill 118 is currently available on the Internet, www.elaws.ca. Building requirements under the new legislation will be brought back for SEAC's information.

It was suggested that in reviewing the next plan, members of the community be involved in the development process.

Members of SEAC are welcomed to forward further questions on the Accessibility Plan to Stephanie Strong's office, Human Resources Services.

5. Action Items

5.1 Resignation

Email correspondence was received as Ms. Susan Grierson's resignation as a representative of the Association for Community Living-North Halton on our Board's SEAC.

RECOMMENDATION	<i>Moved by:</i>	<i>R.A. McAuley</i>
	<i>Seconded by:</i>	<i>R. Quesnel</i>
THAT , SEAC accept Ms. Susan Grierson's resignation as a representative of the Association for Community Living-North Halton on our Board's SEAC.		
		CARRIED

6. Reports/Updates/Discussion

6.1 Review – Identified Communication- LD Students

Mrs. Gail Stelter, Principal with our Board and head of the project's steering committee, took members of SEAC through the document previously distributed.

The steering committee looked at students who have been identified through the process of an identification, placement and review committee as having a learning disability, as per the Ministry's definition. In keeping with the main goal to improve student learning, the committee examined: current practices - with this Board as well as with surrounding boards; existing research around meeting the needs of these students; the role of the school special education resource teacher; the role of technology in our schools and professional development.

The committee also studied the current research with respect to determining how the groups of students would be compiled in the new Learning Centre. Once the Centre is operational, our Board's experience with running the Centre will assist with setting up various student groupings.

Reference was made to the recommendations, their rationale and their framework outlined in the report: 1) the establishment of a learning centre for students identified with Communication-Learning Disability; 2) the development of a comprehensive professional development plan specific to the needs of Communication-Learning Disabled students; 3) the revisiting of the roles and job descriptions of special education staff; and 4) the acquisition of additional resources specific to the needs of Communication-Learning Disabled students.

The first year will be a pilot year and entrance to the new Learning Centre will be granted to students having been identified through the IPRC process as being communication – learning disabled, as per the Ministry of Education definition.

The timeframe for implementing the proposed recommendations was discussed. The Superintendent of Special Education Services will review the contents of the report and its recommendations with the current 2005-2006 Special Education Services Team with serious consideration given to the financial implications.

It was indicated to members of SEAC that the term standards used in the title of this review was meant to be used in our attempt to use a standards-based approach to the review. Currently, there are no provincial-based standards for communication – learning disability, as there are none for the other exceptionalities. In future, these types of reviews will be called service reviews.

This item will be brought back to SEAC for further discussion.

Thanks were extended to Gail Stelter and the Steering Committee for their involvement in, and commitment to the project.

6.2 Special Education Budget

A comparison study of the Special Education Budget 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 will be brought to SEAC at a later date. Comments around the Special Education budget can be directed to the office of the Superintendent of Special Education Services.

6.3 EVAC Chairs – System Schools

Members of SEAC took note of the attached report. The Board is involved in an ongoing process of acquiring EVAC Chairs for system schools and training is being provided.

6.4 CODE (Council of Ontario Directors of Education) (verbal report)

The Ministry of Education has made funds available for the implementation of the *Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students With Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6* CODE Project. A two-day Ministry information session was held to provide input to Directors of Education, Superintendents of Special Education, as well as Superintendents of Program Services across the province to examine implications with respect to the development of projects funded by CODE.

7. Information

7.1 SEAC Directory

7.2 Central Office Special Education Staff List

Members took note of these information items.

8. Agency Updates

8.1 Easter Seal's *Penny Power* Project information has been distributed to system schools - children saving pennies for other children needing special equipment.

Mention was made of a newspaper article submitted by a student, recipient of the Board's Spirit of Inclusion Award, around the issues of social acceptance and the importance of a positive attitude toward inclusiveness.

8.2 Down Syndrome Association

Upcoming *Buddy Walk*, November 7th, 2005 – details to follow next month. A mention was made of our Board's special needs students, who participated in the Provincial Special Olympics this past summer.

9. Future Agenda Items

9.1 Service Review – Deaf & Hard of Hearing Exceptionality

9.2 KITS – Resource Tool for Parents (M. Forhan, L. Kovalhcek)

9.3 Update – Service Review – Gifted Education

- 9.4 Identified Special Needs Students
- 9.5 Minority Reports – Board Response

10. **Date of Next Meeting**
October 17th, 2005

11. **Adjournment**

11.1 **Motion for Absenteeism**

RECOMMENDATION	<i>Moved by:</i>	<i>A.A. LeMay</i>
	<i>Seconded by:</i>	<i>L. Kovalchek</i>
<i>THAT, Ms. H. Ross; Mr. B. Quesnel; Mr. C. Learn; Mrs. M. Forhan and Ms. G. Pearce be excused.</i>		
CARRIED		

11.2 **Motion for Adjournment**

RECOMMENDATION	<i>Moved by:</i>	<i>D. Goch</i>
	<i>Seconded by:</i>	<i>L. Kovalchek</i>
<i>THAT, the meeting adjourn.</i>		
CARRIED		

11.3 **Closing Prayer**

The meeting adjourned with a prayer at 9:30 p.m.