

Halton Catholic District School Board
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, November 24, 2008
7:00 p.m. – Board Room,
Catholic Education Centre

Members/Alternates Present: Ms. K Drexler; Mrs. P. Houlahan; Mrs. L. Kovalchek (Chair); Ms. C. McCarney
Mrs. R. Quesnel (Vice Chair); Mr. J. Trovato; Mrs. L. Volkers

Members Excused: Mrs. J. Matters

Members Absent: Mr. C. Learn; Mr. B. Rivera

Staff Present: Mrs. S. Rossini, Superintendent of Special Education Services
Ms. J. Foster, Supervising Principal
Ms. J. Parisi, Special Education Consultant
Ms. K. Slomka, Special Education Consultant
Ms. T. Wilson, Chief Social Worker

Recording Secretary: Ms. A. Swinden

1. **Call to Order**

1.1 In the absence of L. Kovalchek, R. Quesnel assumed the role of Chair and called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. The meeting opened with a prayer led by S. Rossini.

2. **Approval of Agenda**

RECOMMENDATION

Moved by: C. McCarney

Seconded by: P. Houlahan

THAT, the agenda be approved as presented.

CARRIED

3. **Actions to be taken**

3.1 **Approval of Minutes – October 27, 2008**

RECOMMENDATION

Moved by: P. Houlahan

Seconded by: K. Drexler

THAT, the minutes for the October 27, 2008 SEAC meetings be approved as presented.

CARRIED

4. **Presentations**

4.1 **Children's Mental Health & Agency Coordination**

Theresa Wilson

T. Wilson provided, through the use of a PowerPoint presentation, information related to mental health. She reviewed the types of mental health concerns, the challenges related to the provision of service to families affected by mental health issues, and the social stigmas associated with mental illness. She highlighted the importance of partnerships in integrating services, increasing understanding, and facilitating service for families.

T. Wilson also outlined the school based supports in place in Halton Catholic schools to address these concerns; she noted that currently the Board employs 34 Child and Youth Counsellors (CYCs), 2 Social Workers, 8 members of psychology staff, 9 chaplaincy leaders, and student success staff. T. Wilson indicated that staff were in-serviced last school year, and will receive further in-servicing on mental health issues at the December 5th P.A. Day.

Members of SEAC expressed concern with the fact that there are only two social workers employed by the Board. In response to a request for clarification on process of allocation of CYCs to schools, T. Wilson indicated that various factors are taken into consideration when determining the composition of the special education team at each school, including not only the population of the school, but the distinct needs of the school community. Currently one CYC is assigned to each secondary school. S. Rossini suggested that further discussions related to the augmentation of support staff would be more appropriately addressed when the Board reviews its annual budget.

R. Quesnel suggested that it may be prudent to have a representative from the mental health sector on SEAC.

L. Kovalchek joined the meeting at 7:32 p.m. and assumed the role of Chair.

5. **Action Items**

There were no Action Items.

6. **Reports/Updates/Discussion**

6.1 **Individual Education Plans**

S. Rossini/J. Parisi/K. Slomka

Provincial Overview/Update

S. Rossini addressed the Ministry of Education's commitment to improving the IEP so that it can be more effectively linked to the provincial report card. She noted that the Ministry has released 6 templates for IEPs, and are expected to release an additional 6 templates in December; a total of 26 templates will be provided to school boards by the end of June 2009. S. Rossini provided members of SEAC with samples of the IEP templates.

Overview of the IEP Process – IEP Engine

J. Parisi and K. Slomka provided an overview of the IEP engine available on StaffNet (the Board's internal/intranet site for staff). They noted that IEP training is provided to teachers throughout the course of the school year. The software is linked to *Trillium*, the Board's student information data software.

Secondary Connections

K. Slomka addressed *Secondary Connections*, a webpage under StaffNet that is provided to secondary teachers as vehicle for them to access information. Teachers may access IEP training on this webpage. K. Slomka indicated that currently 100% of teaching staff at 4 out of the Board's 8 secondary schools have registered to use the IEP engine; noting that it is the responsibility to ensure that they access this engine. K. Slomka added that 98% of IEPs at the secondary school level are accommodations only.

Consultation and Communication

Discussion ensued around the consultation process between teaching staff and parents as it relates to a student's IEP. Some SEAC members raised concern that consultation is not occurring with parents prior to the IEP being sent home.

K. Slomka clarified that the IEP is a working document, and consultation with parents occurs on a continual and ongoing basis. It was noted that while some parents prefer a telephone conversation with teachers versus a face to face meeting, every communication that takes place between a teacher and parent that relates to a student's IEP is considered a part of the consultation process. She noted that SERTs will be asked to document on a student's IEP all communications (formal and informal) that take place with parents.

J. Parisi indicated that the Ministry requirement stipulates that parents receive a copy of their child's IEP within 30 school days from the start of the school year; this year IEPs were due on October 15th. She noted, however, that classroom teachers and SERTs meet on a regular basis to work on a student's IEP, well before the due date.

J. Trovato noted that parents should be part of the collaboration at the front end of the discussion. The following recommendation was put forth:

RECOMMENDATION

*Moved by: P. Houlahan
Seconded: C. McCarney*

That SEAC request the Superintendent of Special Education Services review the administrative process in the parent involvement in the development of the IEP.

CARRIED

The Chair thanked K. Slomka and J. Parisi for their presentation.

7. **Information**

7.1 **Superintendent's Report**

Suzanne Rossini

J. Foster provided an update on the *Best Buddies* program, noting that it will continue to be offered at Assumption Catholic Secondary School this year. She will provide further updates to SEAC as they become available.

S. Rossini responded to a query raised at the October 27th SEAC meeting, noting that to date 215 educational assistants (EAs) have received the two-day training at the Geneva Centre; an additional 55 EAs have received the one-day training. The plan is to have all EAs trained at the Geneva Centre by the end of June 2009.

S. Rossini indicated that she attended the CODE summit meeting, noting that the training on Assistive Technology was extremely well received by all in attendance.

She also addressed the in-house training on ABA methodologies scheduled to take place at three different locations. She invited SEAC members to attend, noting that she will forward the details.

S. Rossini noted on behalf of the Regional Transition to School Committee, that the JK/SK Information Night will take place in the spring.

8. Agency Updates

There were not updates

9. Future Agenda Items – December 15, 2008 Christmas Dinner Meeting

9.1 Gifted/MID/DD Program Updates *Tami Browne/Victoria Goodwin-Duncan*

10. Future Agenda Items – January 26, 2009

10.1 Update on EQAO Results (oral report) *Erica Van Roosmalen*

10.2 Review of Parent Involvement in the Development of the IEP *Suzanne Rossini*

10.3 CCAC Supports - *the Chair requested that SEAC members submit specific questions in advance* *Karen Drexler*

11. Other Items

SEAC Message for School Newsletters

11.1 C. McCarney will prepare a message from SEAC for the March school newsletters.

11.2 R. Quesnel asked T. Wilson to prepare an update for the newsletters on mental health issues.

12. Future Agenda Items

12.1 Gifted Screening Procedures *Tami Browne*

12.2 Impact of Proposed Full Day Kindergarten on Special Education Resources *Suzanne Rossini*

12.3 Home Instruction for Special Education Students *Theresa Wilson*

12.4 Provincial IEP Changes

12.5 SEAC Information Flyer

13. Next Meeting: December 15, 2008

14. Adjournment

14.1 Motion for Absenteeism

RECOMMENDATION

THAT, Joanne Matters be excused.

CARRIED

14.2 Motion for Adjournment

RECOMMENDATION

Moved by: P. Houlahan

Seconded by: K. Drexler

THAT, the meeting adjourn.

CARRIED

14.3 Closing Prayer

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