

Members/Alternates Present: K Drexler; P. Houlahan; L. Kovalchek (Chair); C. Learn; J. Matters; C. McCarney; M. McDermott; R. Quesnel (Vice Chair); J. Trovato; B. Rivera; L. Volkers

Staff Present: M. Pautler, Director of Education
O. Foese, Psychological Associate, Clinical Supervision
K. O'Driscoll, Speech & Language Pathologist
J. Foster, Supervising Principal

Recording Secretary: K. Harkness

1. Call to Order

1.1 Opening Prayer

1.2 Introduction of HCDSB's Director of Education, Michael Pautler

L. Kovalchek introduced the Board's newly appointed Director of Education, M. Pautler. Members of SEAC introduced themselves and identified the Association which they represent.

M. Pautler provided some background in regards to his career in education and elaborated on his experience as a Special Education teacher of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. He noted that one of his goals as Director, during his first year, is to visit each school in order to get to know the staff and the school community so that he can get a sense of their culture and their character.

Members of SEAC were encouraged to contact him with any questions.

L. Kovalchek expressed her appreciation to the Director for giving SEAC the opportunity to respond to the entry plan questionnaire and thanked him for attending the meeting.

2. Approval of Agenda

The following items were added to the agenda:

- 7.4 Provincial Parent Associations Advisory Committee (PAAC)
- 8.1 Halton Down Syndrome Association Update
- 8.2 Easter Seals Update

RECOMMENDATION

Moved by: C. McCarney

Seconded by: J. Parisi

THAT, the agenda be approved as amended.

CARRIED

3. Actions to be taken

3.1 Approval of Minutes – January 26, 2009

A minor change was made to the minutes to accurately reflect the members of the *Spirit of Inclusion Award Selection Committee*.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved by: J. Trovato

Seconded by: R. Quesnel

THAT, the minutes for the January 26, 2009 SEAC meeting be approved as amended.

CARRIED

4. Presentations

4.1 Ontario Psychological Association (OPA) Project Update

O. Foese/K. O'Driscoll

O. Foese and K. O'Driscoll presented the 2008-2009 OPA Project: *Remedial Pilot Project (RRPP)*. This project is funded by the Ministry of Education through the OPA Student Assessment Project and is intended to support school boards in addressing the following four objectives:

1. to reduce wait times for students requiring professional assessments;
2. to enhance teacher capacity to provide effective programming for students with professional assessments;

3. to improve literacy/numeracy for students provided with professional assessments; and
4. to sustain assessment process improvements for the long term.

The project's primary purpose is to provide systematic remedial reading instruction for Grade 1 students at risk for early reading difficulties which may eliminate the need for more formal assessments, as well as, reduce the overall number of assessment referrals.

Current enrolment statistics as well as 2003/2006 Early Development Instrument (EDI) results were used for the selection process. Schools identified include St. Brigid, St. Joan of Arc, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pope John Paul II and St. Timothy.

After the initial screening in September, children identified as being at risk for reading difficulties were placed in one of three predetermined study conditions:

1. Reading First Program
2. Remediation Plus (R+) System
3. Regular Classroom Instruction – This group is considered the control group for the study.

In both study conditions 1 and 2, the intervention program is currently being delivered by a trained teacher in small group sessions, four times per week, half an hour per session.

The following schools were *randomly selected* for each of the three study conditions described above: St. Brigid (North Halton) and Sacred Heart of Jesus (Burlington) – Reading First Program; St. Joan of Arc (Oakville) and Pope John Paul II (Oakville) – R+ System; and St. Timothy (Burlington) – Regular Classroom Instruction.

The OPA Project is scheduled to end in August 2009.

O. Foese and K. O'Driscoll responded to questions. J. Matters requested a follow-up upon receipt of the results.

L. Kovalchek thanked O. Foese and K. O'Driscoll for their presentation and asked SEAC members to forward any questions to their attention.

5. Action Items

5.1 Nomination – New SEAC Member

L. Kovalchek

The following recommendation was put forth:

RECOMMENDATION

Moved by: P. Houlahan

Seconded by: J. Trovato

THAT, the Halton Catholic District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) accept the nomination of Lisa Preza as representative for the Association for Bright Children (ABC) of Ontario, Halton Chapter, on the Board's SEAC, and recommend that Halton Catholic District School Board appoint Ms. Preza to the SEAC effective March 30, 2009 until November 2010.

CARRIED

6. Reports/Updates/Discussion

6.1 Information Night

S. Rossini

S. Rossini provided an update in regards to the Information Night scheduled at the end of April 2009. She noted that the results of the Phase I gifted screening have been communicated to the Board's Psychology Department; a second stage gifted screening will be conducted after March Break. S. Rossini will e-mail SEAC with the actual date of the Information Night once she meets with staff.

L. Kovalchek explained what should be expected in an Information Night for parents of newly identified students. She indicated that S. Rossini and her discussed a number of options including Education Week as an opportunity for parents to obtain a better understanding of the types of programs available. This would also allow them to meet teachers and visit classrooms. Another option would be to invite parents to the schools' open house where there are contained gifted classes.

L. Kovalchek spoke in support of an Information Night and asked for participation to form a sub-committee in order to assist in organizing the event for 2010.

As another forum, J. Trovato suggested the annual Parent Conference as an avenue to deliver pertinent information to parents. L. Kovalchek suggested that perhaps SEAC could consider one or both, the Parent Information Night and the Parent Conference. She also addressed the importance of meeting the needs of parents as some are unavailable during the day.

Members of SEAC interested in hosting a Parent Information Night in 2009-2010 were asked to contact L. Kovalchek as soon as possible.

6.2 **Engaging Parents of Students with Special Needs (C.O.D.E. Publication) Part II** *S. Rossini*

S. Rossini indicated that she recently attended a symposium with J. Foster on advanced issues in Special Education whereby it was reported that parents of newly identified students require significant support.

Members of SEAC reviewed and discussed the leadership element of the Parent Engagement publication, under the sections of Knowledge, Ethos and Practice. They also discussed how the needs of parents and students can be met.

P. Houlahan questioned the required number of staff members in attendance for an IPRC. In response, R. Quesnel suggested that an IPRC is basically a formality and that all the work is done ahead of time. J. Trovato briefly elaborated on the purpose and intent of pre-IPRC meetings.

Referencing the Practice for Leadership, R. Quesnel elaborated on the practice of a neighbouring Board, specifically the involvement of SEAC representatives on Parent Councils. Prior to establishing a similar practice, it was suggested that a sub-committee be established to ensure that a consistent message is delivered to all Catholic School Councils.

P. Houlahan questioned the means by which parents could obtain more information on the Premier technology. In response, S. Rossini talked about the possibility of opening up the ATLC to parents who might be interested in learning about assistive technology and to parents whose children are attending those centres.

L. Kovalchek suggested that Shared Solutions, Premier Technology and IEPs could be considered as topics for the Parent In-Service session.

R. Quesnel reminded everyone that VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children has created an IEP Parent Guide that is very user friendly. She will obtain copies for members of SEAC.

S. Rossini thanked SEAC for a very fulsome discussion and suggested discussing relationships and communications at the March meeting.

6.3 **IEP Development and Implementation Processes** *P. Houlahan*

P. Houlahan shared with members of SEAC her vision in creating a process that could lead to improvements. It was suggested that there be an informal discussion, the essence of which could be brought back for further discussion at SEAC.

S. Rossini referenced the requirements of the legislation and addressed the relationships at the school level with parents in terms of the IEP process. She acknowledged that Special Education Services can make a difference and that the process should focus on relationships.

J. Trovato gave the parent's perspective of the IEP process and more specifically, the problems around input being incorporated into the working document.

S. Rossini addressed a number of questions on CODE.

7. Information

7.1 Superintendent's Report

S. Rossini

S. Rossini reviewed the activities and the presentations that will take place on the Special Education Professional Development Day on April 24, 2009 both at the secondary panel and the elementary panel.

S. Rossini addressed questions from K. Drexler re: Speech and Language Pathology.

7.2 Halton Accessibility Showcase

L. Kovalchek

The Halton Accessibility Showcase will take place on April 23rd. Details of the event were provided. SEAC's participation was discussed. J. Trovato, P. Houlahan, R. Quesnel, C. Learn and J. Matters expressed interest in assisting and in attending. They will communicate with L. Kovalchek via e-mail.

7.3 Spirit of Inclusion Update

L. Kovalchek

Members of SEAC were informed that the sub-committee is scheduled to meet on March 11th. Members of the sub-committee were reminded that the profiles are confidential and must be returned to J. Foster immediately following the March 11th meeting. The Administrative Assistant for SEAC will collate and coordinate the information for the 21st Annual Student Awards of Excellence Ceremony on April 21, 2009.

7.4 Provincial Parent Associations Advisory Committee (PAAC)

K. Drexler

A request was made for a list of SEAC members and the agency which they represent. The Chair noted that the information is available on the Board's website under SEAC's link.

8. Agency Updates

8.1 Halton Down Syndrome Association Update

K. Drexler

K. Drexler provided information regarding upcoming events. L. Kovalchek requested feedback from A. Cooke regarding the workshop.

8.2 Easter Seals Update

L. Kovalchek

L. Kovalchek reminded members of SEAC that March is Easter Seals Month.

9. Future Agenda Items – March

9.1 CCAC School Health Support Services

K. Drexler

The Chair requested that SEAC members submit specific questions in advance of the meeting.

9.2 Special Education Budget

P. McMahon/S. Rossini

9.2 Relationship and Communications

S. Rossini

10. Future Agenda Items

10.1 Gifted Screening Procedures

T. Browne

10.2 Home Instruction for Special Education Students

T. Wilson

10.3 Impact of Proposed Full Day Kindergarten on Special Education Resources

S. Rossini

10.4 SEAC Information Flyer

S. Rossini

11. Next Meeting: March 30, 2009

12. Adjournment

12.1 Motion for Absenteeism

There were no absent members.

12.2 Motion for Adjournment

RECOMMENDATION

Moved by: P. Houlahan

Seconded by: C. McCarney

THAT, the meeting adjourn.

CARRIED

12.3 Closing Prayer

The meeting closed with a prayer at 9:11 p.m.