Those present:
Judy Colantino, Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton and SEAC Chair
Lita Barrie, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children and SEAC Vice-Chair
Judith Bishop, Trustee
Doug Foster, CHOICES - Supporting People with Developmental Disabilities
Jenny McEwen-Hill, McMaster Children’s Hospital Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation Portfolio
Barbara Reeves, Autism Ontario (Hamilton-Wentworth Chapter)
Pat Senft, Community Living Hamilton
Lynn Vanderbrug, Lynwood Charlton Centre

In attendance:
Vicki Corcoran, Superintendent of Education - Leadership and Learning

Also in attendance:
Maria Carbone, Hamilton-Wentworth Principals’ Council - Elementary
Linda Lauppe, Hamilton-Wentworth Principals’ Council - Elementary
Heather Moffat, Hamilton-Wentworth Principals’ Council - Secondary
Wilma Minaker, Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union, Local 527

Regrets:
Adrian Mackey, The Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton
Sandra Starr, Association for Bright Children of Ontario
Tracy Sherriff, P.A.L.S. – Parent Advocacy Learning Support Group

1. Call to Order/Welcome
J. Colantino called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m., welcoming everyone.

(a) Message from the Chair
None.

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| 2. Approval of Agenda | Revisions: Added Items under Correspondence
  ▪ St. Clair Catholic District School Board re Special Education Preparatory Courses (referred to SEAC at the February 25, 2013 regular Board meeting)
  ▪ Trillium Lakelands DSB re Special Education Preparatory Courses
It was moved by D. Foster, seconded by J. McEwen-Hill: That the agenda be approved as amended. CARRIED. |
| 3. Approval of the Minutes | It was moved by L. Vanderbrug, seconded by P. Senft: That the minutes of the January 30, 2013 meeting be approved. CARRIED. |
| 4. Business Arising from the Minutes | None. |
| 5. Correspondence | The Chair drew attention to the SEAC correspondence, including the additional letters (lay down items).
SEAC had some discussion about the key common issues raised in the letters.
There was consensus that SEAC should write a letter (or letters) |
  a) Renfrew County District School Board re Special Education Funding Model
  b) Wellington Catholic District School Board re Special Education Funding |
to the Ministry of Education about these issues and perhaps add other relevant ones.

Feedback from the members were noted as follows:

**Special Education Preparatory Courses**
- It may be helpful to get staff's insights/input.
- Due to concerns with inconsistency and confusion with the Special Education program among the faculties of education, and limited amount of time in terms of the curriculum, the Ministry should provide emphasis on Special Education in the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP).
- There should be practical application of knowledge gained from the courses; too much emphasis on online special education qualification programs.
- These courses should have some prescribed parameters and structure.
- The Individual Education Plan (IEP) and how to create inclusive learning environment are key topics that should be covered.
- There are many requests for volunteering to learn or gain experience on teaching.

**Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) – SEAC supports emphasizing this in Grade 9 Health curriculum.**

**Special Services at Home (SSAH) and Passport Programs**
- Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board’s issues around inadequate funding for those with severe disabilities.
- At HWDSB,
  - Had conversation regarding protocol and discussion with school boards nearby,
  - There were many concerns including psychological testing,
  - There was discomfort signing something without the details, concerns with transition meetings in addition to what we already have,
  - Received information about three ministries having regional meetings (not yet scheduled) and there are differences on some definitions.
- Lack of clear message and guidelines from the Ministry of Education with regard to these changes.
- There is disconnect in terms of funding – individuals losing considerable opportunities to access resources and skills improvement.
- Barriers in accessing various ministries in terms of funding e.g., lack of respite time for parents.

**Special Education Funding Model**
- SEAC may want to revisit this issue again.
- J. Bishop advised that trustees were invited by the
Ministry to send a letter about funding and the Ontario Public School Boards’ Association (OPSBA) is developing its document on funding model. The reality is that one Board may be receiving a higher level of funding than another.

- Could we invite Ted McMeekin, Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) to come and speak at SEAC.

The following SEAC members volunteered to help in developing the committee’s letter regarding the preceding key issues discussed:

1) H. Moffat – Special Education Preparatory Courses and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
2) J. Colantino – Passport funding issue
3) J. McEwen-Hill - How the concerns and issues will affect the ground level people?

6. Department Updates

V. Corcoran noted the following:

- There has been some difficulty in coordinating the joint SEAC with HWCDSB.
- Staff are looking at programs in terms of special classes.
- Social Communication class in Ancaster -- working through first group of students.
- A self-contained autism class has been added in the second semester at Sir Allan MacNab.
- The new Graduated Support Class at Sherwood is progressing well. Students have been provided with Tim Horton cards as part of a social inclusion initiative. The Sherwood program is looking at a math program which has a gaming platform.
- Staff are looking at a different kind of comprehensive model for both elementary and secondary panels which involves greater inclusion.
- There are less number of students being put forward for self-contained programs. Planning continues for next year.
- Invite letter from the Council for Exceptional Children to SEAC for the upcoming “Yes I Can!” Awards Dinner on Thursday, May 9, 2013 at Michelangelo’s Banquet Centre was shared.

In response to questions, V. Corcoran offered the following clarifications:

- Dundas School strategy – there will be two autism classes and actual numbers are still being reviewed along with student profiles.
- In terms of program strategy, the focus is on an asset, rather than a deficit model.
- Families will have choices.

7. Members’ Updates

Autism Ontario (H-W Chapter)

B. Reeves reported that all chapters of Autism Ontario are doing different activities, referring the members to posters outlining these which she gave to V. Corcoran.
V. Corcoran agreed to pass these posters to Corporate Communications for school distribution.

**VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children**

L. Barrie advised that the organization prepared some documents around budget considerations for school boards, including some guidelines. She agreed with the Chair’s suggestions of sending these to the Board trustees.

**Parents As Partners Initiative**

The Chair noted the next presentation regarding transition to high school but no definite date has been set at this time. The event has been postponed. Confirmed details will be posted on the website (including relevant links) and shared with SEAC as soon as available.

V. Corcoran shared an issue about some parents who have great relationships with their respective schools and hesitate to ask questions as they are concerned this may strain the relationship with the schools.

The Chair stressed the Parents As Partners initiative is about empowering parents and given an opportunity to recognize that they can ask questions from their schools/staff.

**Trustees**

J. Bishop informed of her recent visit to three programs at Lisgar School. She was pleased seeing students taking ownership and staff’s considerable efforts around these programs.

J. Bishop advised of the recent passing of the husband of Vicky Wyelson-Sher (former SEAC Chair/member), requesting that a sympathy card be sent to Vicky and family.

The Chair also referred to the sudden passing of Paul Brown, a special education teacher at Sir Allan MacNab School.

### 8. Other Business

None.

**Adjournment:**

It was moved by J. McEwen-Hill, seconded by Barbara Reeves: That the meeting be adjourned, this being done at 8:52 p.m.

CARRIED.