# Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

MEETING NOTICE – Monday, March 5, 2018 at 7:00 pm

Association for Bright Children (ABC) Diana Avon Melissa Rosen by phone

Autism Society of Ontario – Toronto Lisa Kness

Brain Injury Society of Toronto (BIST) regrets Melissa Vigar

Community Living Toronto *vacancy*

Down Syndrome Association of Toronto Richard Carter

Easter Seals Ontario Deborah Fletcher

Epilepsy Toronto regrets

Integrated Action for Inclusion (IAI) Margarita Isakov

Learning Disabilities Association Toronto *vacancy*

VIEWS for the Visually Impaired David Lepofsky by phone

VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children regrets

TDSB North East Community Aline Chan Nelson Lui

TDSB North West Community Curtis Bulatovich

TDSB South East Community Diane Montgomery Dick Winter Olga Ingrahm

TDSB South West Community Paula Boutis Nora Green

TDSB Trustees Abdul Patel Alex Brown Alexandra Lulka

Regrets: Cynthia Sprigings (BIST), Rick Strutt (NE Community Alt), Paul Cross (VOICE), Jean-Paul Ngana (NE Community Rep.), Jordan Glass (SW Community Rep.),

TDSB Staff Present: Uton Robinson, Executive Superintendent, Special Education and Section Programs,

Lori Moore, Centrally Assigned Principal for Special Education, Craig Snider, Executive Officer, Finance, Rob Brown, Research Coordinator,

Jennifer Newby, Centrally Assigned Principal, Learning Centre 4

Lianne Dixon, SEAC Liaison

Minutes by: Lianne Dixon

**MINUTES (DRAFT)**

*(All notes included in these minutes are paraphrased by the recorder.)*

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm

1. **Declaration of Possible Conflicts of Interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

1. **Approval of the Minutes for SEAC Meeting of Monday, February 5, 2018**

A spelling correction was made – then the Minutes were approved by Curtis Bulatovich. The revised minutes have been posted on the SEAC website.

1. The SEAC Special Education Budget Working Group (sub-committee) was introduced. Craig Snider presented his power point presentation and answered questions about the board budget, with specific focus on the special education budget.

The sub-committee had sent a number of questions to Craig Snider, Executive Officer, FInance, but due to short timelines, some of the questions were not able to be answered during this session. An invitation was given to Craig to return at a later date with further information and answers to the SEAC questions.

In addition to the presentation slides, Craig referenced “The Toronto District School Board Financial Facts: Revenue and Expenditure Trends” February 2018.

<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/AboutUs/docs/Financial%20Facts_February%202018_V10.pdf>

Key Points in the Presentation:

* Annual operating budget of $3.3 billion
* Board consistently spends more than its full grant for Special Education. This year it is approximately $32.7M above the grant.
* Other funding gaps include cost of supply teachers, salaries and benefits (the Province has never addressed the initial salary and benefit gap prior to provincial discussion table agreements)
* The Board utilizes sources of funding and other revenues to offset the gaps.
* The budget for 2018-19 is balanced based on enrolment projections;
* The budget being presented will be a status quo budget based on 2017-18 budget, updated for enrolments
* In April, the Board will vote on the full operating budget for the 2018-19 school year (depending on release date of GSN)
* Staff costs represent approximately 65% of Board budget.
  + Student enrolment is the primary driver of staff allocation for most categories
* Information about the budget is shared through information sessions, ward forums, the TDSB website, and input can be made by the public through an online survey.
  + Online Survey: [www.tdsb.on.ca/survey/budgetinput](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/survey/budgetinput)
  + Community budget information sessions throughout February and March (Ward Forums)

Craig Snider took several questions from SEAC members.

* How much of the supply budget is for Elementary and how much is Secondary?
  + $66.9M elementary and $28.1M Secondary
  + Teachers are paid full pay for 11 sick days and then 90% for subsequent ones
  + Has been increase in number of sick days being taken
* SEAC is supposed to be consulted in the budget process – in this presentation members were told what the budget is going to be. How do we get SEAC involved in consultation before the budget is set.
  + Craig suggested that if SEAC has input or suggestions for changes next year, that motions can be made and presented to the board. This year’s budget, however is a status quo balanced budget based on the previous year with changes based primarily on enrolment numbers.
* With the Enhancing Equity Task Force recommendations and increased inclusion resulting in more students with higher needs in the regular classroom, is there an increase in funding for support staff (SNA’s/EA’s)?
  + Executive Superintendent Robinson clarified that there has not been a decrease in SNA’s over the past year, and in fact those numbers have increased. He also reminded SEAC that support for inclusion happens though capacity building and professional development/training, not just through adding additional human resources to classrooms.
  + Craig Snider reiterated that the funding for support staff is based on formula and on enrolment
* Does funding for Section 23 come directly from the Ministry or through TDSB?
  + Section 23 funding for teachers comes through TDSB

1. **Staff Updates and Requests for SEAC input**

Executive Superintendent Robinson shared highlights from his Department Report and answered questions/received feedback from SEAC members.

**Highlights:**

* There is a commitment to all of our places of learning for students. The board will continue to support Special Education students, including Gifted, through parent choice of local school placement or congregated sites.
* We will review our Individual Education Plan and Identification, Placement and Review

Committee (IPRC) processes to ensure greater clarity, transparency and accountability so that parents, guardians and students feel valued and included

* We will continue to provide Special Education programs and schools for students with special education needs as a necessary and differentiated approach to supporting all students.
* Emphasized equity goal focused on student achievement and well-being. We want all students to have opportunities for success.
* Changes to home school program for next year went through the system in internal communication to schools.
* In the 2018/19 school year, HSP will only support Junior and Intermediate students (Grades 4-8 only).  No Grade 2 or 3 students will be placed in HSP in the next school year.
* There will be a focus on making sure that staff are mindful of professional learning opportunities in support of these changes
* Taking steps to provide a more transparent process for parents – IPRC script was shared with SEAC
* IEP brochures will be coming shortly

**Research Coordinator Rob Brown presented Special Education information.**

* Special education needs in both the TDSB and the province have increased, primarily due to the increase in what we call “IEP only” students who have an IEP in Regular classes.
* Likewise, the number of and proportion of students in **“Non-identified (has an IEP): Special Education Classes” has increased** slightly to 4,055 from 3,989 (and to 1.7% from 1.6% of the full TDSB population)
* The TDSB decline of students with exceptionalities in congregated classes continues, at a rate exceeding the rest of the province (although the TDSB still has a very sizeable gap compared to the rest of the province).
* At the same time, the very sizeable gap between the TDSB and the rest of the province in terms of Gifted congregated and Non-identified congregated has actually increased.

A number of concerns/questions arose from the Department Update that was shared in the Meeting Mail out.

IPRC Script/Process

* Script does not say that parents can ask for programming recommendations
* Script says that if a committee is notmable to make a decision, it can defer and come back to parents with a recommendation.
  + This cannot happen because all discussions must take place in front of parents
* How much time is allotted to each iprc meeting?
  + Most times it is 30 – 40 minutes, but when needed, more time is provided.
* Translators? Concern about language barrier?
  + Translators are offered and provided. There is also an option for a phone in translator if a need arises.
* Clarification was provided that an IPRC meeting is not similar to a parent/teacher interview or IEP meeting.
  + IEP meetings can take place any time that changes are being made to the IEP or if the parent needs to discuss the IEP.
  + The IEP consultation letter is kept in the OSR.
* To what extent is parent preference accommodated?
  + Parent preferences are taken into consideration when the IPRC is recommending placement options.
  + There is always a discussion asking parents for input
* IPRC should be making the “right” decisions for students – based on what is right, not based on money/cost
* What process is followed when there is disagreement or conflict in this process?
  + Parents are to follow the Parent Concern Protocol.
  + If that doesn’t lead to a resolution, there will be a new step of involving superintendents that is just being put into place in the near future as a result of the Enhancing Equity Task Force. Information will be provided shortly.
* Executive Superintendent Robinson thanked the Committee for their comments and input and will take these points into consideration when the IPRC document is being further revised.

**6.**

**6. Special Education Employment Working Group (sub-committee)**

* Presented draft Motion “Ensuring More Equitable Outcomes for Students with Special Needs”

Points of Discussion:

* Sometimes students are not included in planning their employability – they need to included and build on their strengths and interests
* Concern about lack of employment in TDSB of people with intellectual disabilities. We have programs to ensure hiring of other groups, there should be consideration for hiring employees with intellectual disabilities
* Need to ensure that our recommendations are speaking about all students with disabilities not just intellectual disabilities
* Discussion around the definition of disability – board understands its legal definition. The suggestion was made to add AODA definition

Move to vote on the Motion with the amendment of adding the AODA definition by Curtis Bulatovich. Seconded by Margarita Isakov. Motion passed unanimously

1. **Priorities** – A list of priorities was distributed based on feedback from members and discussions at SEAC in the fall of 2017. The Chair requested that the item be deferred to next month in order to give members an opportunity to review and email any additions/suggestions to the SEAC Liaison.

**8. Enhancing Equity Task Force Next Steps Action Plan**

* A motion was proposed to develop a SEAC subcommittee to begin discussion on the EETF and its recommendations
* The following SEAC members volunteered to join this subcommittee: Melissa Rosen, Curtis Bulatovich, Nelson Lui, Nora Green, Lisa Kness, Margarita Isakov, Richard Carter, David Lepofsky
* This subcommittee will be working on multi-year (3 year) strategic plan coordinating with the EETF plan which will drive the direction of the board for the next three years.

**9. Association Reports**

**VIEWS**

David Lepofsky has been appointed to serve on the K-12 Education Standards Development Committee that will recommend what the Education Accessibility Standard should include. This committee will be responsible for developing standards for accessibility for K – 12. There are representatives from all different disability groups, and school boards. At the April SEAC meeting, SEAC members will be asked to provide input to David around disability barriers.

**Down Syndrome Assocation** –– World Down Syndrome Day is March 21st. This year’s theme is “What Do I Bring to my Community”

[**https://worlddownsyndromeday.org**](https://worlddownsyndromeday.org)

**Black History Month workshop**

Jean Paul Ngana reported on the workshop that he attended organized by the TDSB Parent Engagement office with the theme: “Have you had the talk? The race/racism talk?”

At this workshop, aimed at parents of African descent, parents were encouraged to have discussions with their children - “the talk” - focusing on race, not racism. Participants shared their personal experiences at work, school and in the community.

**Autism Society of Ontario**

[**https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/world-autism-awareness-day**](https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/world-autism-awareness-day)

World Autism Awareness Day is coming up. On Tuesday April 3, over 350 municipalities will be raising the flag for autism. Flag raising ceremonies will take place at Toronto City Hall and at the TDSB Head Office**.**

**10. OTHER BUSINESS**

**Future Agenda Items**

* Discussion and review of SEAC Terms of Reference and TDSB Bylaws
  + Terms of Reference will be shared with SEAC members for review for next meeting (April)
* Operating Budget
* Invite International Dyslexia branch to come to next meeting to present information about their organization in preparation of an application to fill association vacancy
* Discussion about better promotion of SEAC through various social media
* SEAC Parent Survey on website – update of current results

**Correspondence**

* Reviewed the correspondence shared with SEAC this month
  + Toronto Family Network sent an email about following up with the results of the Parent Survey on the SEAC website. This email will be distributed to members and will be addressed at a future meeting.

**Meeting was adjourned at 9:12 pm**

**Next meeting is April 9, 2018 at 7:00 pm**