# Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

MEETING NOTICE – Monday, May 7, 2018 at 7:00 pm

Association for Bright Children (ABC) Melissa Rosen

Autism Society of Ontario – Toronto regrets

Brain Injury Society of Toronto (BIST) regrets

Community Living Toronto *vacancy*

Down Syndrome Association of Toronto Richard Carter

Easter Seals Ontario Deborah Fletcher

Epilepsy Toronto Steven Lynette

Integrated Action for Inclusion (IAI) Margarita Isakov

Learning Disabilities Association Toronto regrets

VIEWS for the Visually Impaired David Lepofsky

VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children Paul Cross (Rosary Kwak)

TDSB North East Community Aline Chan Jean Paul Ngana Nelson Lui

TDSB North West Community Jordan Glass

TDSB South East Community Diane Montgomery Olga Ingrahm Dick Winters

TDSB South West Community Nora Green

TDSB Trustees Alexander Brown Alexandra Lulka

Regrets: Cynthia Sprigings, Lisa Kness, Trustee Abdul Patel, Myriam Rodgriquez, Curtis Bulatovich, Rick Strutt , Paula Boutis, Valerie Gonzalez-Chavez,

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

Lori Moore, Centrally Assigned Principal for Special Education,

Susan Moulton, Centrally Assigned Principal, Learning Centre 2

Lianne Dixon, SEAC Liaison

Minutes by: Lianne Dixon

MINUTES (Approved)

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

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm

1. Declaration of Possible Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

1. Approval of the Minutes for SEAC Meeting of Monday, April 9, 2018

A minor change in attendance was made, then a motion to approve the Minutes as circulated was made by Melissa Rosen, seconded by Jean Paul Ngana. Revised minutes are posted on the SEAC website.

1. SEAC Parent Survey

Jacob Klugsberg and Samantha Currie (Osgood Law students), supervised by Paula Boutis and David Lepofsky presented a summary of the qualitative and quantitative results from the SEAC Parent Survey (on the SEAC website). The results were distributed to SEAC members and posted on the SEAC website.

SEAC acknowledged the hard work of the Jacob and Samantha, as well as their supervisors and thanked them for the report. Below is a synopsis of the results:

* Reviewed over 1600 responses – both qualitative and quantitative
* Themes that emerged from open ended questions (over 700) were in two major areas:
  + Resource based Concerns
  + Accessibility and Integration Concerns
* When asked when parents knew that their children had special needs, approximately 40 percent knew before students started school, most others became aware in the primary grades.
* Parents wanted early access to supports.
* When asked about how parents found out about what programs are available, only 10 percent said they learned a considerable amount when interacting with TDSB.
* Most parents say they found out information through other parents or their own research rather than TDSB or the Ministry website.
* Parents wanted better information up front.
* Parents were concerned by what they perceived as jargon and raised issues around access to information.
* Parents felt they were able to voice their concerns, but often felt they weren’t getting a response – they had to “jump through hoops” – take multiple steps to get what their child needed.
* Both at the beginning and when the IEP was being implemented, parents felt ongoing communication was lacking – not frequent enough and there was a lack of sensitivity to their concerns.
* Parents who were critical could document a negative experience with the system – and those that were positive expressed a positive experience.

Several questions from SEAC members were posed and were answered by staff and Samantha and Jacob.

1). Q. Even parents who had initial negative experiences, were they able to in the end be satisfied with what was happening?

A. There were lots of individual cases where there was initial frustration, but then the parent was happy with what progress was being made. Many wrote that an individual school or teacher/principal had made a huge difference.

2). Q. Can you transfer an IEP from one board to another? What happens to special needs students when they register from a different school board.

A. Each board has their own criteria so exceptionality doesn’t transfer from one board to another. There is usually an intake meeting and parents often share that the child has an IEP and/or is identified. The school reviews information about the child and then there may be IST/SST discussions around whether the IEP needs to be continued. If it is an IPRC’d student, the school is guided by the IPRC decision and parental preferences. Programs are not always aligned from board to board, so we try to match the program as closely as possible. If a student moves within TDSB, the IEP transfers automatically.

3). Q. A concern was raised about staff training – does TDSB pay for courses?

A .There is ongoing professional learning happening for all teachers through many different avenues. Central staff that work in the classroom with staff are experts and very helpful in providing supports and training to teachers in complicated situations.

4).Q. We hear that teachers are going to have training in the new inclusive classroom. There is a concern about how teachers are going to learn all the things they need to learn. Parents don’t know what training is happening. Can TDSB track the number of hours that teachers receive additional training?

A. Teachers have access to their learning plan on Key to Learn for keeping track of their professional development. We also report on all of our Professional Learning in the special education plan. We track and report number of participants and hours. UDL is being rolled out now for teachers and Educational Assistants. There are lots of different professional development opportunities. Many teachers take additional qualification courses throughout the summer and TDSB also offers summer institutes. There are also a number of opportunities for embedded learning.

5).Q. Do we track how conflicts are resolved? Do we have a way of tracking if we are doing a better job of getting information to parents? Are we tracking any of this and if not, are we thinking of tracking?

Can you share with us how we track and monitor where we are at the next meeting?

A. In terms of the TDSB website, we are updating documents and they will be brought forward for feedback. We respond to many challenging situations and we treat them as an opportunity to learn so that fewer parents are “fighting” and their concerns are being addressed in a timely manner. We have qualitative data from what was just shared in the parent survey. We need to look at how we monitor and track feedback. There are climate surveys and we also gather IPRC and IEP data. We have previously shared that the number of IPRC’d and IEP’d students is going up. We have also shared that through professional learning we can decrease number of IEPS.

6).Q. Do Occasional Teachers take professional development and is it mandatory?

A. Occasional Teachers are qualified teachers. Some take additional courses and some don’t. Specific information could be requested through employee services to look at qualifications of Occasional Teachers. Many of our Occasional Teachers, when they become LTO’s, participate in the learning opportunities in the school. Others participate on their own time.

7). Q. How did staff in attendance feel when you read the report? What was your reaction?

A. Anytime there is one parent having trouble communicating with the board, it is one too many.

**Motion: Refer SEAC Parent Survey Report (2018) to all Trustees (D. Lepofsky May 7, 2018)**

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) refers the SEAC Parent Survey Report (2018) to all Trustees for the purpose of supporting the need for an independent review of Special Education in TDSB, as recommended by SEAC motion (Independent Review of TDSB to Ensure the Needs of Students with Special Needs are met or Reforms Established. (D. Lepofsky April 9, 2018).

This motion was put forward by David Lepofsky, it was seconded by Melissa Rosen and the motion was passed unanimously.

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:

# Post-secondary and Employment Goals for Students with Disabilities Report

# At the PSSC (Programs and School Services Committee) meeting on May 2nd, the “Post-secondary and Employment Goals for Students with Disabilities Report” was presented. Focus was on looking at what is already in place for students with regards to their pathways, with discussion around the use of documents such as MyBlueprint, and current co-op opportunities in the board including SPEEL (Special Education Experiential Learning). In terms of going forward, we need to look for additional partnerships to make sure that there are more opportunities, and to collect data on post-secondary pathways (especially for those with a Mild Intellectual Disability and a Developmental Disability) with support of the Research Department. Recommendations include working more closely with employers to expand pre-employment programs.

# Part of the action plan was to defer the Report to SEAC for consultation in early fall. This would include looking at SPEEL in partnership with the Teaching and Learning Department. This Report will be added to the SEAC Agenda early in the 2018/19 school year.

Wexford PS (Deaf/Hard of Hearing) Co-enrollment Program

Using both an integration and reverse integration model, students from mainstream Kindergarten classes work alongside their peers, who are DHH. This provides a myriad of benefits not only for the students themselves, but also for parents and the school community at large. All children in the Co-enrollment Program, along with the teachers who work directly with this cohort, are more engaged with each other and have come to develop empathy, acceptance and understanding of one another.

Rick Hansen Foundation

The TDSB has a partnership with The Rick Hansen (“Man in Motion”) Foundation and they offer speakers--free of charge--for schools.  There are also many free resources available for teachers and administrators.

Arts Alive

SEAC members were reminded of “Arts Alive – Where Everyone is Able!” on June 12th, 2018 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.Arts Alive is an Arts Event for students with cognitive disabilities, physical disabilities and autism (e.g., DD ISP, ASD ISP). The location will be at Hollycrest Middle School (630 Renforth Drive, Etobicoke, Ontario).

Special Education Plan

We are in the process of revising the Special Education Plan, based on the Ministry of Education parameters. The motions that SEAC has passed provide important input into the plan.

SEA (Special Equipment Amount) Claim Update

**2017-2018:**

63 Interactive White Boards

1200 Individual SEA Laptop Claims (approximate – still in process)

134 Cart Claims (received as of April 30 – still in process)

**2016-2017:**

146 - Interactive White Boards

1220 – Individual SEA Claims

94 – Cart Claims

* This year, the SEA team has streamlined the process to make it easier for schools to get technology
* There is an emphasis on group claims – technology for many students to share and use – as opposed to individual claims
* Cart (10 laptops and a charging station) claims are for 10 computers – previously schools needed 10 assessments, now need only 3 assessments for a cart claim
* Claims are processed by April 30th so that they can be reported to Ministry
* We are processing and auditing throughout the year. Students would typically get equipment within two months. If claims arrive right at the deadline, it can take a bit longer – or may be held off until September delivery
* We submit claims to the Ministry. TDSB pays $800.00 and the balance is refunded by the Ministry
* Per Pupil Amount – pays for the training and software
* Any laptops from SEA have an S at the beginning – any school budget computers will start with a C
* Looking this year at more equitable distribution – some schools have lots of technology – others have less – so we targeted schools with less technology
* Cart claims don’t move with students – they stay at the school – individual claims move with students if they are needed
* Currently WordCue is available for grades 7/8/9 and Read and Write Gold for all computers and home use
* This year there has been a sustained effort to work with digital lead learners to offer workshops around specific technology needs. The SEA team partnered with them and offered 5 days of sessions to Digital Lead Learners to showcase the software and applications that are being used by special education

Children’s Treatment Network (CTN)

Children’s Treatment Network (CTN) became responsible for School Based Rehabilitation Services funded by the Ministry of Child and Youth Services in the spring of 2018. CTN School Based Rehabilitation Services works with several service provider organizations to provide Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech Language Pathology services to eligible students in publicly funded schools in Central Toronto, York Region, Simcoe County and Muskoka. For more information about this program or for questions related to privacy and consent please visit our web site at <http://www.ctnsy.ca/schoolrehabservices>

Changes to Home School Program Letter

A letter explaining that there will no longer be HSP(Home School Program) in primary grades starting in the 2018/19 school year was sent home to all families late in April. This letter was shared with all Trustees prior to being sent home.

Auditory Verbal Therapy

The issue of Auditory Verbal Therapists was raised last SEAC meeting. In TDSB, there is a teacher who is AVT trained. It would be useful to have another discussion at a future meeting. It will be added to the June agenda.

Parent Concern Protocol

The Parent Concern Protocol and IEP letter had been shared along with other special education documents for input from SEAC members.

The following are some of the comments/questions that arose:

* There will be further details coming forward about revisions to this document.
* The suggestion was made to add a flow chart. There is a flow chart on the TDSB website <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Contact-Us/Steps-to-Address-Questions-Concerns>
* A change was recommended from referral to School council. It should likely be school principal.
* AODA customer service standard has a feedback process – our standard should be based on AODA.
* What is missing is a student concern protocol – students need to be educated that they have rights and what their protocol is for them to stand up and self-advocate.
* These documents should be part of the TDSB Special Education Plan.
* There needs to be a detailed plan for communication. These documents need a substantial rewrite, for example, “exceptionality” is not a term that parents use or are familiar with.
* The IEP letter also needs to be revised. The question was raised about whether the box that parents can check indicating that they do not wish to be consulted should be removed since we want all parents to be involved.
* SEAC should receive communication prior to it being distributed to parents. The recommendation was made that SEAC invite the Communication Department to a meeting to brainstorm avenues of reaching people and to develop a communication plan.

**MOTION – Include Special Education Documents in the Special Education Plan (Richard Carter)**

The documents (Special Education information brochures, IEP consultation letter, and Parent Concern Protocol) should be included in the Special Education Plan in order that they are reviewed annually (Richard Carter May 7, 2018).

This motion was put forward by Richard Carter, seconded by Nora Green and was passed unanimously..

1. Trustee Report – (Trustee Brown)

* SEAC’s Motion from last month (Independent Review) was reluctantly moved onto the floor
* The Director spoke against it, but Trustee Brown was not able to provide details at this point
* The Director offered to come to SEAC to explain the rationale.
* Questions were raised about how PSSC prevents SEAC motions from going to the board
* There was a concern that not all Trustees were given an opportunity to hear the motion

**MOTION (Alexander Brown)**

SEAC invites the Director to address SEAC at the June meeting and provide a written response to the SEAC motion for an Independent Review prior to the meeting.

**MOTION (Alexander Brown)**

SEAC invites the Chair of the to board address SEAC at the June meeting and provide a written response to the SEAC motion for an Independent Review prior to the meeting.

These motions were put forward by Trustee Brown, seconded by Deborah Fletcher and both passed unanimously.

1. Panel Discussion of highlights from Dr. David Mitchell’s presentation was deferred to the next meeting.
2. Working Group Updates

There were no updates from working groups

1. Association Reports

* Autism Speaks Walk – Sunday June 3 (<https://www.autismspeaks.ca/get-involved/participate/autism-speaks-canada-walk/>)
* Down Syndrome Buddy Walk - May 12th, (<https://www.dsat.ca/bw-location>)
* The 31st Canadian Down Syndrome Conference will take place in Hamilton, Ontario, May 18 to 20, 2018. (<https://www.cdss.ca/community/events-activities/down-syndrome-conference/>)
* VIEWS – submitted a brief to government – standards to be a teacher of visually impaired are very low – lower than other provinces – want to get them raised.

1. Other Business

Motion for Tracey O’Regan to be the new SEAC Representative for Community Living Toronto was moved by Jordan Glass, seconded by Aline Chan and passed unanimously.

Proposed Meeting dates were shared for next year. Most are the first Monday of the month.

These dates have been amended to:

Sept. 10, 2018 (North York Civic Centre), October 1, 2018, November 5, 2018, December 10, 2018, January 7, 2019, February 4, 2019, March 4, 2019, April 1, 2019, May 6, 2019, June 17, 2019. These dates still need to be approved by the Board.

1. Correspondence

* Chair Richard Carter noted correspondence around the Student Health Support Policy (Draft) which will be distributed to members.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Next meeting is June 18th, 2018 at 7:00 pm. This meeting will be held at the North York Civic Centre in Committee Room 3.

Parking is at the same location