# Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

MEETING NOTICE – Wednesday, September 12, 2018 at 7:00 pm

Association for Bright Children (ABC) Melissa Rosen

Autism Society of Ontario – Toronto Lisa Kness

Brain Injury Society of Toronto (BIST) Cynthia Sprigings

Community Living Toronto Tracey O’Regan

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 Myriam Rodriguez

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

TDSB South East Community Diane Montgomery Dick Winters

TDSB South West Community Nora Green

TDSB Trustees Alexander Brown Trustee Lulka

Regrets: Trustee Patel, Olga Ingraham, Jordan Glass

TDSB Staff Present:

Kathy Witherow, Associate Director, TDSB

Brendan Browne, Executive Superintendent, Leadership and Learning

Janine Small, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education

Kevin Hodgkinson, Transportation Services

Garry Green, Transportation Services

Craig Snider, Executive Officer, Finance

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 7:11 pm

The Chair informed SEAC of the resignation of Community Representative Rick Strutt.

He recognized and thanked Uton Robinson, Executive Superintendent, Special Education and Section 23, for all his hard work and commitment to SEAC and his support to special education students and families.

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

No conflicts of interest were declared.

1. **Approval of the Minutes for SEAC Meeting of Monday, June 18, 2018**

A motion to approve the Minutes as circulated. Revised minutes are posted on the SEAC website.

1. **Introductions**

Dr. Kathy Witherow, Associate Director Leadership, Learning and School Improvement, introduced herself. Kathy had been seconded to the Ministry in the Student Achievement Division where she worked on Literacy and Numeracy initiatives. She has also been a Superintendent of Curriculum and Instructional Services in York Region as well as a Superintendent of Schools. She is strong believer in public education and one of her goals in TDSB is to bring Teaching and Learning and Special Education together and to help make local schools better. She is excited to come to TDSB at this time and is looking forward to working with SEAC.

Dr. Brendan Browne, Executive Superintendent, Teaching, Learning and School Improvement, introduced himself. Brendan has been involved with Special Education his whole life. He has been a school principal as well as a Superintendent of Special Education. He has worked in Halton and has accomplished a great deal working in partnership with SEAC in the past. Brendan is excited about the mandate and looking forward to working with SEAC.

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

* Craig Snider, Executive Officer, Finance
* Kevin Hodgkinson, Transportation Services
* Garry Green, Transportation Services
* Kathy Witherow, Associate Director
* Brendan Browne, Executive Superintendent

**Transportation Information**

Craig Snider, Garry Green and Kevin Hodgkinson made a presentation and provided details about the start up this September for students receiving transportation services.

* The summer was spent getting ready for school start up – there were sufficient drivers to start the year
* There continue to be some challenges – there still is some driver turnover and still some applications that are being processed
* New software was developed that has benefits to parents because they can log on to the portal for information
* New feature coming in January – “where’s my bus’ - be able to track their child’s bus through GPS tracking
* First priority is for students with special needs
* Next year, routing will start in spring/summer – there will be changes but it will be a starting point
* Students will be prioritized if they have special needs and/or have had challenges this year
* In August, parents can see the route and decide if there are issues
* There is a new website for transportation and parents are encouraged to sign up to be able to access details of their child’s route and any delays/changes SEAC members were asked to help share the importance of signing up on the transportation portal. Transportation hopes to get many more parents signed up.
* The website is <https://busplannerweb.torontoschoolbus.org>

Staff representing Transporation answered questions from SEAC members. Key information is listed below.

* The portal allows contact with families and schools so that everyone is aware of bus changes.
* Transportation is geography based, but specific concerns about individual students are taken into consideration.
* The new website is accessible.
* When a new driver is assigned, information is shared and the previous driver often goes along the route with the current driver for transition.
* There is a harness request form that requires a doctor’s note for additional restraint. Once that is received, the harness is approved. As far as removal of harness, it is not formalized. It was recognized having students work towards not having a harness whenever possible as they get towards 21 years of age would be an important step towards independence.
* Drivers receive initial training and annual refreshers
* Every three year they receive first aid and defensive driving training
* All drivers have Vulnerable Sector and Police Reference Checks upon hiring and then complete an annual offence declaration
* Training includes doing a child check every day after every run
* MTO provides the Board with Driver Abstracts
* The contracted bus companies do training around special needs. TDSB and TCDSB prepared package for the operators. The Safety officer goes to safety meetings to audit them.
* The driver is an employee of the operator and they’re responsible for consequencing drivers using progressive discipline.
* The Board can remove a route from a carrier if there are issues with the route.

1. **Staff Report**

Kathy Witherow, Associate Director and and Brendan Browne, Executive Superintendent presented highlights from the Department Update.

Multiyear Strategic plan – is now posted on the TDSB website.

Home school Program – beginning this year is only grades 4 – 8

Grade 3 Universal Screening –

* will take place during the first week of October at all schools. This year all students are taking part unless parents request that they do not participate.
* The information that is gathered from the screening is a snapshot that provides information about the individual needs of all students.
* If there is an unusual profile, staff have been trained to bring students to IST. There was Professional Development last year for teachers as well as information for parents about what the results mean. We have customized the back page of the report to help parents understand the scores.
* The Research Department is looking at the data from the Universal Screening process. Rob Brown is working on a report.
* The screening tool is accessible. There is a large print version, it can be read to students and other accommodations can be made.

Organizational Chart

* Not yet rolled out as the boundary/ward issue needs to be resolved first
* There are system superintendents who can’t be designated yet as they are still assigned to learning networks.
* Will be shared as soon as it is available.
* The different departments will work together
* Changing the structure signals to schools that we are talking about inclusivity in a different way.

Action Plans

* The Trustees’ Multiyear Strategic Plan outlines the direction of the Board. The Action Plans are the operationalization of the Multiyear Strategic Plan. We are in the process of finalizing the Action Plans which will be rolled out in early October.
* They are one to two to three year plans which are meant to be shared with the public. We want to be held responsible for these plans. There are goals set out and strategic plans to meet the goals.
* When we talk about how we meet the needs of ALL our students, part of our plan to move forward is professional learning for all, some and few. Schools are all at different places depending on capacity of staff and needs of students. System staff will be able to work in individual learning centres.
* There is an essential learning plan for all administrators and the sessions are mandatory.
* There is going to be a team approach at the school level. We want to actually address the needs at the school level, based on the students we have, and the staff we have – what do we need to provide in the way of training?
* The leader of the school is the principal - supports will come from the superintendent to principals. Principals need to be given the right resources to do their jobs. Superintendents need to be in schools having conversations with principals, teachers and in classrooms. Accountability is built into Action Plans.

1. **Budget presentation – Highlights**

* Craig Snider offered to come back to present to SEAC in October or November to bring back a picture of the budget as it aligns to the organizational structure. He can also come to SEAC at every step of the budget process.
* November is the time that they do a three year projection and he can present that projection at that time.
* Some of the EPO grants have not been announced or released yet.
* Grant for Student Needs (GSN) – the Per Pupil Amount was changed slightly with a net impact of 3.4 million dollars
* Special Incidence Portion was changed – reduction of 1.8 million dollars
* Net improvement in the budget from the Ministry of 1.6 million dollars
* Funding for multidisciplinary teams – still 2.9 million, but the use of funding has broadened
* NTIP – increase that was planned was cancelled with a loss of 92 000 dollars.
* Trustee Honorarium – increase was cancelled
* Focus on fundamental mathematics is now broader

1. **Trustee Report**

* Bill was passed by the provincial government. to revise the ward boundaries. Trustees voted on the alignment - 22 wards for 22 trustees. Most align with provincial ward boundaries and 3 are a combination of 2 wards.
* There was very little time to go through this process. Special Education was not considered.
* Trustees voted for distribution of schools option – there was no other analysis because there was no time. It will not have an effect on the Learning Centres.
* SEAC members asked trustees to take back to the board that special education students need to be taken into consideration

1. **TDSB Special Education Plan - Update**

* The Special Education Plan will be posted very soon.
* Changes to the plan will be discussed at the next meeting
* A working group and/or plan for consultation will also be discussed

1. **Working Group Updates/Plan** – there were no working group updates
2. **Association Reports**

* When candidates are coming around to members please ask them to take the “Student with Disability Pledge” #swdp
* Association for Bright Children - Oct 14th is a one day conference at the Ontario Science Centre – Melissa Rosen will l share more information.

1. **Other Business** – SEAC Annual Report will be shared with SEAC before submission
2. **Correspondence Received by SEAC** – Email from The Family Network was shared with SEAC
3. **Adjournment/Next Meeting Date**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 pm The next meeting is October 1st, 2018 in the Board Room at 5050 Yonge Street.