

Draft Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes

September 10, 2012

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was convened at 7:07 p.m. on Monday, September 10, 2012, in the Boardroom, 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario, with Steven Lynette presiding.

The following committee members were present: Diana Avon, Ginny Pearce, Clovis Grant, Richard Carter, Heather Breckenridge, Tammy Simon, Paul Cross, Yama Arianfar, Olga Ingrahm, Christina Buczek, Phillip Sargent, Jean-Paul Ngana, Nancy Ann Turner Wright, Debra Hayden, Trustee Howard Kaplan, Trustee John Hastings, and Trustee Sam Sotiropoulos

The following staff members were present: Sandy Spyropoulos, Cindy Burley, David Johnston, Marilyn Lowe, Craig Tsuji, Margo Ratsep and Daniel Nortes.

1. Approval of the Agenda

Richard Cater moved: **That the agenda be approved.**

The motion was carried

2. Declarations of Possible Conflict of Interest

None declared.

3. Confirmation of the Minutes of June 4, 2012

Paul Cross moved: **That the minutes of the SEAC meeting held on June 4, 2012 be confirmed.** The motion was carried.

4. Delegations and/or Presentations

(a) Collaboration between SEAC and PIAC

SEAC received a presentation from the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee Special Education Working Group (see page 4) on a partnership between the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee and SEAC re engaging parents in their children's education to improve achievement and to ensure the continued rights of students with special learning needs.

5. Beginning Teachers' Summer Institute

Paul Cross provided an oral report about his attendance at the Beginning Teachers' Summer Institute in August 2012.

6. Chief Academic Officer's Report

Sandy Spyropoulos presented a report (see page 7) to the Committee.

7. System Superintendent's Report

Cindy Burley presented a report (see page 12) to the Committee.

8. Professional Support Services Report

Dave Johnston presented a report (see page 14) to the Committee.

9. Reports/Updates from Representatives and other Committees

(i) Communications Subcommittee

Steven Lynette reminded members of the need to share their association brochures with the committee at large and special education office; to foster better understanding and communications between members and the board.

10. Local SEAC Association Reports

(a) Downs Syndrome Association

Richard Carter informed the members that the association is currently looking for a new president.

(b) VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children

Paul Cross advised that VOICE is holding its annual Parent Night on October 3, 2012 (see page 16).

11. Correspondence received by the Chair

- E-mail dated June 25, 2012 from Janis Jaffe White re Toronto Family Network Questions re SEAC Minutes of June 3, 2012
- E-mail dated May 30, 2012 from Paul Cross re TDSB Community Engagement Policy Steering Committee Meeting
- Letter dated April 23, 2012 from Jim Dawson, Bluewater District School Board to Hon. Laurel Broten
- Letter dated June 27, 2012 from Gil Lavalley, SEAC Chair, Wellington Catholic District School Board to Hon. Laurel Broten
- Letter (undated) from Sharon Walker, SEAC Chair, Near North District School Board to Hon. Laurel Broten

12. New Business

a) Next Meeting Date

At the request of Trustee Kaplan, the meeting scheduled for November 5, 2012 was changed to November 12, 2012.

b) Appointment of members to the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee Special Education Working Group

On motion of Trustee Sotiropoulos, consideration of the following, moved by Trustee Kaplan was postponed to the next meeting of the committee:

Whereas, a number of issues common to SEAC and PIAC have emerged over the past few years; especially around issues of special education.

Therefore, be it resolved that SEAC appoint at least two members to act as a SEAC working group to work together with corresponding PIAC working group members to explore ways of collaboration between PIAC and SEAC.

13. Adjournment

At 9:19 p.m. Paul Cross moved: **That the meeting be adjourned.**
The motion was carried.

Steven Lynette
Chair

Date: September 11, 2012

To: Special Education Advisory Committee

From: Parent Involvement Advisory Committee – Special Education Working Group

Re: Collaboration between SEAC and PIAC

The Parent Involvement Advisory Committee of TDSB is excited about this opportunity to introduce ourselves to SEAC and to open discussions about a partnership between the two groups. The purpose of this collaboration is to achieve the goal of engaging parents in their children's education to improve achievement and, what we understand to be your objective as stated on the board web site "to ensure the continued rights of students with special learning needs". Together, we have a stronger voice.

The Ministry of Education mandates two specific advisory committees in every board in the province: the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC).

Because of the direct correlation between parent involvement and student achievement, the Ministry of Education recognizes the importance of parent involvement in our schools through the Parent Involvement Advisory Policy and created the PIC in each School Board to support parent engagement.

The Ministry of Education provides funding in the amount of \$5,000.00 base and 17 cents per student for each PIC.

The PIAC membership includes elected or appointed parents from each of the 22 wards (both a delegate and an alternate), elected members of Board-recognized Community Liaison Groups, two parent chairs, a designate from the Director's office, a Trustee representative and a member of the Parent and Community Involvement Office.

PIAC identifies issues related to parent engagement and community involvement for discussion and information. PIAC also discusses and

responds to items referred to PIAC by the Board and makes recommendations or provides comments through the board's various committees, such as Programs and School Services and Human Resources.

We are on our way to achieving full representation from all Wards across the city which we achieved for the first time in the 2011 – 2012 school year. We communicate with school councils and parents directly in a variety of ways which include the PIAC website, www.torontopiacle.com, email lists, ward meetings, school council meetings, quadrant meetings for special issues, conferences and workshops and the school council chair dinner.

Our intention is to share information, resources and news from the TDSB and the Ministry of Education that will help parents to be involved, positive and effective in the school community when addressing their child's successes and needs and to collect feedback from parents on issues in education and to communicate these to the TDSB and the Ministry of Education . We have had many successes and understand that we can broaden our scope by involving others. PIAC seeks the involvement and expertise of the SEAC membership to enhance the platform of advocacy and assistance to the children and parents that utilize the Special Education Services at the TDSB.

PIAC members, as a result of their close affiliations with parents at the local school level, are advised by parents of Special Education issues on a regular basis and, as is true to our mandate, we look for commonalities.

Common issues that have emerged:

- Inconsistent implementation of IEPs at the secondary level and elementary level
- Transportation issues for those with physical disabilities and able bodied students
- Alarm about the impact of budget cuts on staff dealing with special education students
- The concern of some immigrant groups about the designation of their children as special education students
- Need for additional training or implementation of techniques learned in the classroom

- Student access to appropriate technology in a timely manner with appropriate training
- Long wait lists for psych- educational assessment and services
- Challenges with communicating to parents events and policies which affect their children (e.g. read and write gold training sessions, consultations on support services)
- Concerns raised in the TDSB research report Special Education: Structural Overview and Student Demographics from December 2010 particularly as they relate to race and income variables

In light of this, we invite and value your input on the following suggestions:

- A fixed communication pathway to pass on common parent concerns to SEAC
- A collaboration in organizing a parent special education workshop/conference with PIAC funding (special education workshops held at the Nov conference last year were well attended)
- Advising the board staff looking after the emerging new consultation policy about specific strategies tailored to the special education community
- Communicating important special education information/dates to PIAC for inclusion on the website and calendar

We believe that both of our advisory groups consist of volunteer members who are passionate advocates of excellence in public education for all students and, in particular, students with special needs. SEAC has the expert knowledge regarding special education and PIAC has an expanding and comprehensive communication network across the TDSB directed at all parents within the system. We are excited about the success we can achieve through a collaborative effort in terms of improving outcomes and educational experiences for students with special needs and their parents, families and communities.

Submitted by the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee - Special Education Working Group

Special Education Advisory Committee Chief Academic Officer's Report

Special Education Advisory Committee
Chief Academic Officer's Report

September 10, 2012

Our Focus for 2012-2013: 5 Strategic Directions – Year 2

Our focus this year will continue to be on our 3 core priorities as outlined in the Vision of Hope: Student Achievement, Parent and Community Engagement and Financial Stability.

The 5 Strategic Directions will continue to drive our decision making. As we work with our exceptional populations to “*enable all students to reach high levels of achievement and to acquire the knowledge, skills and values they need to become responsible members of a democratic society*” (Mission statement of the Toronto District School Board), we will continue our efforts to:

1. **Make every school an effective school;**
2. **Build leadership within a culture of adaptability, openness and resilience;**
3. **Form strong and effective relationships and partnerships;**
4. **Build environmentally sustainable schools that inspire teaching and learning; and**
5. **Identify disadvantage and intervene effectively.**

NEW ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Special Education and Section Programs portfolio previously held by Karen Forbes has been combined with the Program Support and Focused Intervention portfolio previously held by Karen Gravitis. The new larger department is now known as “**Special Education, Section Programs and Student Support Services**” and includes:

Special Education, Section Programs, Professional Support Services, Caring and Safe Schools, Gender Based Violence Prevention, Health and Mental Health, Paediatric Clinics, Community Use of Schools, Priority Schools Initiative.

We look forward to working together as an effective and productive team to build a collaborative culture within our department, with our colleagues in schools and in central departments and with our parents, community partners and agencies as we serve our students and their families.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM

We had another successful Special Education summer school program again this year, offering a number of exciting and fun filled activities. These thematic interactive activities engaged our students in specific academic and life skills learning, and at the same time provided a "summer camp" atmosphere. A total of **210** students attended our developmental disabilities programs at Seneca, Beverly, Park Lane, Lucy McCormick, Scarborough Village and W.J. McCordic. The physical disabilities program held at Sunny View had **95** students attend this summer and the

Deaf and Hard of Hearing program had 76 children attend the summer program hosted for a second summer at Glen Park, an awesome facility. Overall our students, parents, community and staff had an enjoyable and enriched experience.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS

Teachers are already busy getting their IEPs underway for the new school year. The Special Education Department continues to offer support to teachers through a series of workshops. Teachers new to writing IEPs were invited to information sessions in both the East and West regions on Monday September 10. Approximately 100 teachers attended the sessions which focused on parent/student consultation, programming and key information to be included in the IEP.

All TDSB schools are now using the web-based IEP and Section 23 teachers are being introduced this year. With all schools using the web application we are able to monitor the status of IEP development and use a report function to examine data filtered through a broad range of free characteristics such as gender, country of birth and language spoken. From these reports we were able to ascertain that as of the end of the day Monday more than 7200 IEPs were underway.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN COLLABORATIVE REVIEW RESULTS

Marilyn presented a summary of the IEP Collaborative Review Results. Please see attached.

IPRC LETTERS

Last May Marilyn Lowe presented new drafts of all letters that are used to communicate with parents about IEP consultation and IPRC processes. These letters, written to adhere to the TDSB plain-language standard, have now been incorporated into the web-based application.

TOWN HALL MEETINGS – INCLUSION

We are hosting 4 Town Hall meetings in October and November to provide an opportunity for parents, community members and the public to contribute to the development of the vision of Inclusion in our Board.

These meetings will take place on:

- October 2 – Runnymede C.I.
- October 11 – William Lyon MacKenzie C.I.
- November 1 – Stephen Leacock C.I.
- November 8 – R.H. King Academy

Our Director will be attending the SEAC Meeting on October 15th to do a presentation on Inclusion.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP) COLLABORATIVE REVIEW RESULTS
June 13, 2012

The following chart provides a comparison of the 13 key elements of the IEP from the original collaborative review that took place during the 2006-2007 school year and the one completed this June. Significant improvements are noted as 10 of the key elements fall within categories identified as targets by the Ministry of Education (Satisfactory & Proficient).

Key Element	Emergent		Developing		Satisfactory		Proficient	
	'06-'07	'11-'12	'06-'07	'11-'12	'06-'07	'11-'12	'06-'07	'11-'12
Template							√	√
Assessment Data			√	√				
Strengths/Needs					√	√		
Accommodations			√			√		
Current Level of Achievement	√					√		
Annual Program Goals			√	√				
Learning Expectations	√					√		
Teaching Strategies			√			√		
Assessment Methods			√			√		
Transition Plan					√	√		
Parent Consultation			√	√				
Link to Provincial Report Card			√			√		
Summary			√			√		
Totals	2	0	8	3	2	9	1	1

It was not possible to save the report to the Ministry in the format in which it was completed. The following information provides an overview of the information shared in the report.

Questions 1 – 3 provided demographic information and noted the participation in our review which was comprised of a SEAC representative, a parent, two students, a principal, a vice-principal, two special education consultants, an elementary Methods and Resource teacher and the superintendent of special education.

Questions 4 and 5 are summarized in the chart on the first page of this report.

Questions 6 and 7 required that we note the target audiences and Board/school level activities that have been offered since the first IEP review focusing on the development of effective IEPs and those planned moving forward. The responses were provided in checklists that covered the areas of Awareness Development, Professional Development, Internal Review and Resource Development. The target audiences were students, parents, teachers, support staff, administrators, central professional services staff, central administrative staff, SEAC and community agencies. Generally speaking the checklists looked the same for both time periods since we have established a long-standing practice of sharing information and building capacity with our various stakeholders. Awareness Development was in place for all groups as was Professional Development with the exception of students. Including more parents in the internal review process on a go forward basis was incorporated into the report. Resource Development was in place for most groups with the recommendation that something be developed for our central professional support services staff. The comments included below were in response to “Other”.

6. The introduction of a web-based IEP/IPRC application has significantly improved accountability with respect to initiating and completing IEPs within the required timelines. It has also enhanced our ability to analyze IEPs based on their content as well as a number of criteria such as gender, language spoken at home, country of birth, exceptionality, etc.

7. School Superintendents - By engaging the school superintendents we are able to ensure that Special Education initiatives are incorporated into School Improvement Plans and that there is accountability with respect to engagement and compliance.

Question 8 asked “How can the Ministry assist you at improving Individual Education Plans?”

8. Our review committee did not always agree with the Ministry's evaluation of the quality of the IEP samples (grading them lower than did the Ministry). There was an expressed desire for IEP samples of better quality that truly reflect the connection among assessment, strengths & needs, accommodations and programming. Also, among all the Ministry IEP samples, there needs to be better representation of how performance tasks are to be used within the Learning Expectations section, particularly in the areas of Language and Mathematics. A better indication of how the Learning Expectations relate to the Annual Program Goals is needed and how to incorporate meaningful measurability in both. The Ministry has stated that the Learning Expectations section should not outline the specific expectations from Ministry curriculum documents, and yet that is what teachers use in determining their programming. Documentation

that demonstrates how to use the Learning Expectations as background information from which modified performance tasks are developed would be helpful for teachers.

It seems like individual boards are creating their own resources and documents to support how to program for students on IEPs. For example, we are developing a resource to help teachers from grades 7 to 12 understand more fully how specific deficits play out in the classroom, the appropriate accommodations to apply and various strategies to use. I have recently become aware that other school boards have developed similar things. Why are we all expending energy working on the same things? Sharing what various boards create is not the same as the provision of a "Ministry approved" comprehensive resource that any special education teacher could access on-line. Such a resource could have modules for teachers of students with specific exceptionalities/diagnoses/conditions as well as a host of other ideas and approaches. Other provinces have done so and it would be good if Ontario could as well.

It would be helpful if the new Ministry document on Special Education K – 12 clearly states that it is ultimately the decision of the school principal (with the backing and support of the IST/SST) and not the parent to introduce an IEP. An IEP is a response to a need for intervention to ensure student success. Educators have a professional responsibility to program, assess and evaluate appropriately for students and sometimes that requires the introduction of an IEP.

Question 9 asked for additional comments, information or suggestions for the Ministry related to the Spring 2012 Individual Education Plan Review as well as for future years.

9. - It would have been helpful to have had an indication that a Review was required prior to the April memo to school boards.

- Perhaps the Ministry could establish a regular review period, such as every 3 years, so that school boards could plan their annual internal reviews with this in mind.

- Participants unanimously indicated that the review process is a worthwhile exercise. No matter what the role, participants were in agreement that good learning took place, from which they will be able to apply a different perspective to future experiences working with IEPs.

Early Learning Program (Full Day Kindergarten)

Full Day Kindergarten began last week in an additional 100 TDSB schools, bringing the total to approximately 50% of our schools. Students are attending all day in kindergarten programs, including the Kindergarten Diagnostic Programs and the Kindergarten Intervention Programs. These special education programs are staffed with a teacher, either an EA or a CYW and lunch hour support. Staff have participated in a number of professional learning opportunities that focused on play-based learning.

Professional Development for Special Education Teachers

Once again this year we will be providing professional learning sessions for teachers on a variety of topics, including exceptionality-specific programming for some of our ISP teachers and sessions for teachers supporting students in the regular class.

On September 20, MARTs, HSP teachers and CL/ACLs, who are new to their role, will participate in a half day workshop about special education policies, procedures and System practices. The workshop has become an annual tradition with the Shared Solutions document and its approaches being referenced throughout the half day. Part 2 of the workshop will be held in December.

Professional Learning for Newly Promoted Principals and Vice Principals

On August 23, our department presented a workshop about special education topics, policies and procedures to approximately 60 newly promoted principal and vice principals. The session was jointly presented by Caring and Safe Schools, Health and Safety and Special Education. There will be additional sessions held throughout the fall which will focus more specifically on teaching and learning for students with special education needs.

Special Education Department Professional Learning

On September 4, the consultants, coordinators and administrators of Central Special Education began this year's work on building capacity within the department. This year's priority is to continue to develop a tiered approach to supporting our schools. As well, the Department had a refresher in the area of privacy, confidentiality and file management, entitled: Working Safe and Working Smart.

Special Education Program Recommendation Committee (SEPRC)

You may recall that we have developed a new process for students entering the TDSB and who may require an Intensive Support Program. Since an IPRC cannot be convened for a student until that student is enrolled in school, the TDSB has established a Special Education Program Recommendation Committee (SEPRC).

We asked the Ministry of Education to clarify that this new SEPRC process is in fact permissible under Regulation 181/98. The response from Barry Findlay was as follows:

“Thank you for the clarification that the two processes are sequential and parents are not required to forego their right to request an IPRC if they agree to a SEPRC. It should be clear to parents that their agreement to participate in an SEPRC would not jeopardize their right to request an IPRC. The ministry does not consider the TDSB’s initiative regarding the SEPRC as an attempt to circumvent the IPRC process as we understand it performs a different function and is supplementary to any IPRC not a replacement.”

Special Education Report

In accordance with Ontario Ministry of Education expectations, the TDSB Special Education Report is now available on the website. Thank you to the SEAC Sub-committee for their input throughout this process.

SEAC Report
Professional Support Services
September 10, 2012

Chief of Psychological Services - At the Board meeting on September 5th, Dr. David Schwartzbein was appointed as Chief of Psychological Services in the East Region, Area D. David began working in the Psychology department for the school board in 1990. Prior to coming to the TDSB, he completed internships at the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry, Wellesley Hospital, and the Institute of Achievement and Motivation. During his time at the TDSB, Dr. Schwartzbein has been Adjunct Clinical Supervisor with York University, University of Guelph and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. He has strong clinical skills, has delivered many presentations to TDSB staff, and is seen as a leader within the Psychology department. We welcome David to the leadership team, and look forward to his contributions to the Psychology staff and to Professional Support Services.

Department Staffing - The following permanent allocations have been approved for the Professional Support Services for the 2012/2013 school year:

Attendance Services – 12
Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Services - 26
Psychological Services - 130
Social Work Services – 112
Speech-Language Pathology Services - 74.5.

Telepsychiatry – This will be the first full year of implementation of this joint initiative with the Hospital for Sick Children. This partnership provides an opportunity for clinical consultation with some of the foremost experts in the field of Child Psychiatry in the Province. In-services are being organized for staff which will focus on Anxiety and Depression; additional topics will be developed over the course of the school year.

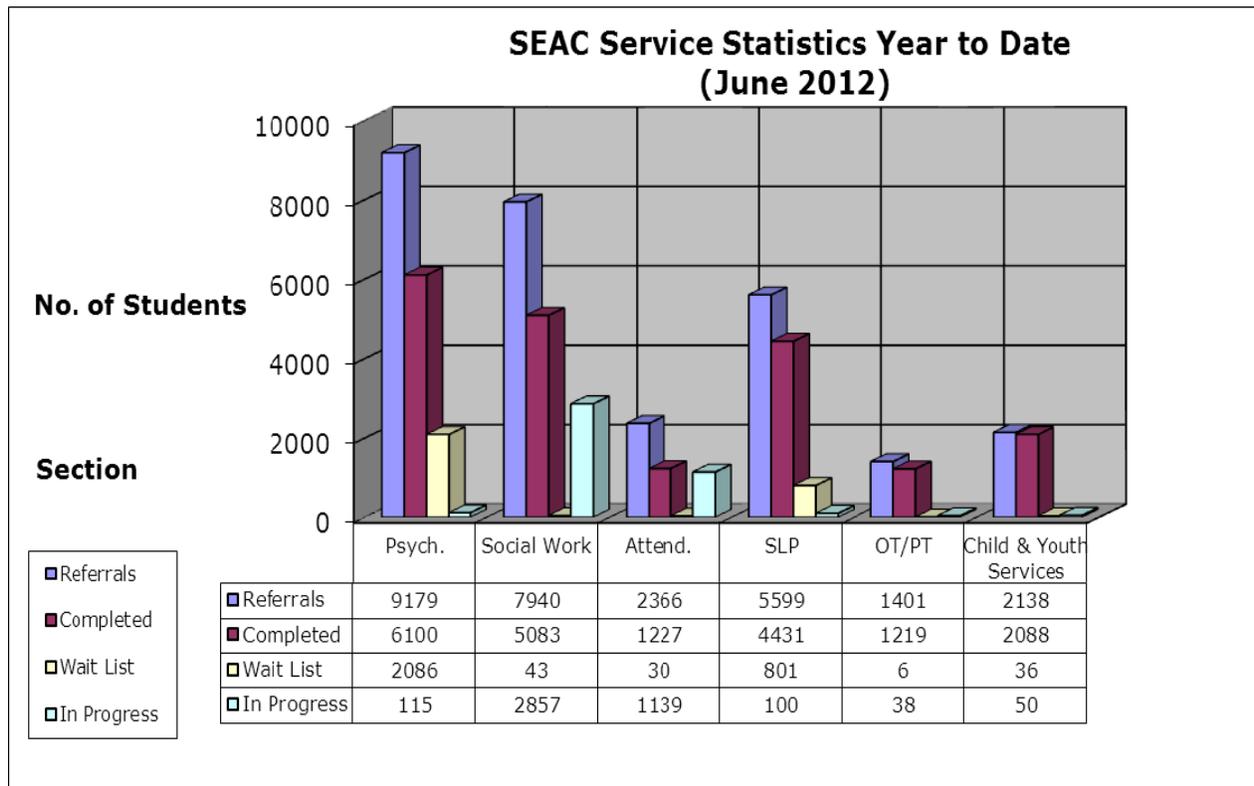
Provincial Mental Health Funding

Mental Health Leads -The Ministry of Education has announced that the TDSB will be included in Phase 2 of this program. As a result, the Co-ordinator of Mental Health and Wellbeing position will be funded by the Ministry. This provincial program (“ASSIST”) is designed to create conditions for promoting positive student mental health and well-being and for supporting students who struggle with mental health and addictions problems; through a focus on leadership, educator capacity-building, and implementation support.

Mental Health Nurses -Meetings were held over the summer with CCAC staff who will be overseeing the “Mental Health Nurses in Schools” program. The TDSB will be working with CCAC in the allocation of 6 nurses who have been provided to support our staff and students. The program is expected to be implemented by October.

Service Statistics June 2012

	Psychology	Social Work	Attendance	Speech Language Pathology	OT/PT	Child & Youth Services
Referrals	9179	7940	2366	5599	1401	2138
Completed	6100	5083	1227	4431	1219	2088
Wait List	2086	43	30	801	6	36
In Progress	115	2857	1139	100	38	50



SEAC Association Report

Name of Association	Voice for Hearing Impaired Children
SEAC Member	Paul Cross
Date of Meeting	September 10, 2012

Upcoming Meetings or Conferences
Annual Parent night for tips on developing Individual Education Plans: Wednesday October 3rd, led by a parent member of Voice who is also a Teacher of the Deaf in another board
New Programs or Services
Special Events
Held our annual Golf tournament over the summer, raising funds to help provide auditory-verbal teaching to children who do not get AVT under health or school funding.
Other Information Shared
Deaf Awareness Week in Ontario, September 23 to 30; various organizations are involved, hosting social and education events throughout Toronto.