

Draft Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes

January 7, 2013

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was convened at 7:06 p.m. on Monday, January 7, 2013, in the Board Room, 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario, with Steven Lynette presiding.

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

Regrets were received from Richard Carter, Gal Koren, Loris Bennett and Najia Shafi.

The following alternate members were present: Elaine Dodsworth-Lever, Raegan Delisle, and Michelle Brick.

The following staff members were present: Sandy Spyropoulos, Cindy Burley, David Johnston, Ken Jinkenson and Margo Ratsep.

1. Approval of the Agenda and Identification of New Business

Paul Cross 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 December 10, 2012

The minutes were amended to reflect the following:

The meeting was convened in the Board Room rather than in the Fifth Floor Executive Meeting Room.

Dr. Robert Gates moved: **That the minutes of the SEAC meeting held on December 10, 2012 be confirmed, as amended.**

The motion was carried.

4. Delegations and/or Presentations

(a) Special Education – Budget

SEAC received a presentation from Craig Snider, Comptroller for Budget, Revenue and Financial Reporting presenting on Special Education –Budget.

Following questions and discussion, Craig Snider undertook the following:

- to provide a table of per pupil Grant amounts and a breakdown of expenditures compared to allocations under broad categories;

- to work with the Special Education department to identify Ministry of Education funding directions that may impact on special education programs and services in the TDSB, and
- where possible within the timeline constraints of the Budget Subcommittee and activities of the Special Assistance Team, engage in consultation with SEAC regarding options for managing the special education deficit.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

(a) Transition Planning – Development Services Ontario (DSO)

Ginny Pearce brought to staff attention concerns regarding information sharing with parents during Transition Planning.

Cindy Burley listed a number of ways in which this information is being shared and identified a possible gap in some stand-alone program schools. There is a plan for special education coordinators to check with all sites and provide guidance using some annotated IEP ideas.

Cindy Burley undertook to provide information about Transition Planning to SEAC members.

6. Next SEAC Meeting Date

Since the Board's organizational meeting takes place on February 6th, SEAC decided to meet on Monday, February 11, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

7. Trustees' Report

Trustee Kaplan announced that a Special Board meeting will place on Wednesday evening with the Ministry of Education Special Assistance Team, whose task is to advise the board regarding management of its operating and capital deficits. SEAC members were encouraged to attend this open meeting.

Trustee Kaplan undertook to provide to the SEAC Liaison the link for the Price Waterhouse Cooper Report.

Trustee Hastings spoke regarding the questions he wished to address to the Special Assistance Team.

Trustee Sotiropoulos identified the focus of the Special Assistance Team as being on operational matters as opposed to special education. He encouraged SEAC members to write to MPPs regarding recent Ministry of Education decisions that impact on the board's ability to control certain identified costs.

8. Chief Academic Officer's Report

Sandy Spyropoulos presented a report (see page 4) to the Committee.

Sandy invited SEAC members to attend the February 11th meeting at 6:00 p.m. to meet with Maureen McKenna to provide representative input on Inclusion. A light dinner will be provided and members are asked to RSVP to the SEAC Liaison.

9. System Superintendent's Report

Cindy Burley presented a report (see page 6) to the Committee.

10. Professional Support Services Report

David Johnston presented a report (see page 7) to the Committee.

11. Correspondence Received by the Chair

- Letter dated December 3, 2012 from Carol Lloyd, President and CEO, Easter Seals Ontario re: resignation of Tina Shier and nomination of Deborah Fletcher as Alternate SEAC Representative for Easter Seals Ontario.

12. Membership of the Committee

On motion of Phillip Sargent, the Special Education Advisory Committee **RECOMMENDS that Deborah Fletcher be appointed as the Alternate Representative for Easter Seals Ontario, on the Special Education Advisory Committee.**

13. New Business

- (i) Ginny Pearce expressed a wish for staff reports to be provided in written form in advance of the meeting. Sandy Spyropoulos explained this request could not be met given present workloads but stated that staff would attempt to provide written information where reports cover dense or complex information.
- (ii) A discussion arose regarding concerns for more timely provision of SEAC meeting minutes and the unexpected removal of Board Service staff from assisting in their recording. Sandy Spyropoulos undertook to meet with Board Services management to express SEAC's concerns about this lack of support and to ask for its reinstatement.
- (iii) Sandy Spyropoulos undertook to write a letter on behalf of SEAC and the Toronto District School Board, expressing thanks to Tina Shier for her many years of contribution on SEAC.
- (iv) Ginny Pearce moved: **That the remaining business be deferred to the next meeting.**

The motion was carried.

14. Adjournment

At 9:25 p.m. Debra Hayden moved: **That the meeting be adjourned.**

The motion was carried.

Steven Lynette
Chair

**Special Education Advisory Committee
Chief Academic Officer's Report
January 10, 2013**

PARENT/GUARDIAN FACILITATOR POSITION

On June 4, 2012, SEAC made the following recommendations:

- a) That in the interest of helping parents navigate the system, a position of Parent Facilitator, Special Education, be established for a trial period of two years;
- b) That the position(s) of Parent Facilitator, Special Education, be filled by a parent or guardian who is familiar with the Board and Special Education;
- c) That funding partners be sought from sources such as the ministries of Education and Health and Children and Youth Services, and other Foundations;
- d) That the Parent Facilitator(s), Special Education, be able to help parents and guardians navigate the Board's Special Education program and connect with services in the community that would support the needs of their child.

On June 20, 2012, the Board referred the above recommendations to staff for further consideration. A staff report being submitted to the Human Resources and Professional Learning Committee on January 16, 2013 will explain that:

The Parent/Guardian Facilitator, Special Education Position was not budgeted for in the 2012-2013 Special Education budget. A reassessment of the financial feasibility of this position will be considered in the future.

Special Education programs and resources will be clearly communicated to parents at the start of the year and at other times throughout the year.

Current practices will be reviewed and further strategies will be developed to assist and support parents/guardians in:

- understanding the processes, policies, programs and supports associated with Special Education at the Toronto District School Board;
- accessing appropriate Special Education programs and supports; and
- maintaining and building positive relationships between parents/guardians and schools.

A Supervising Principal position which was realigned, in September 2011, as "Supervising Principal of Student Achievement, Parent Engagement and Business Practices" will continue to enhance opportunities for parent engagement to improve understanding of Special Education programs and services within the Board.

LABOUR UPDATE

A collective agreement was imposed by the government on those employee groups that did not reach a local agreement by December 31, 2012. Those bargaining units that were in a legal strike position are no longer able to take such action or impose sanctions. This means that teachers will resume their regular duties and routines.

INCLUSION SESSION FOR SEAC

A session on inclusion similar to the town hall meetings will take place prior to the start of the next SEAC meeting on February 11th, 2013 to provide an opportunity for SEAC members to give input from their associations and parents. This session will begin at 6:00 pm.

**Special Education Advisory Committee
System Superintendent's Report
January 7, 2013**

Submitted by Cindy Burley

Parent Information Evenings

On January 15, our Special Education Department Staff will present their twice annual Parent Information Nights focused on the topic of IEPs and IPRCs. These nights are well-attended and offer parents an opportunity to ask key questions about these processes.

Teaching Awareness through Puppetry

TAP is very excited to be launching their new and improved program which is the evolution of 30 years of learning from the Kids on the Block-Toronto program. Teaching Awareness through Puppetry is a Canadian based interactive disability awareness program, offering new and specialized performances geared to students in grades 1-3 and 4-6. The content reflects Ontario curriculum requirements in an educational and fun way. On average, 2 schools per family of schools have been chosen.

SEAC Report
Professional Support Services
January 7, 2013

Student Support Leadership Initiative

The TDSB is the host Board for this province-wide initiative funded by the Ministry of Education. The Student Support Leadership Initiative (SSLI) is a time limited project designed to engage staff from the TDSB, TCDSB, and Child and Youth Mental Health services connected with the Ministries of Children and Youth and Health and Long Term Care. It is intended to enhance access, communication, and co-ordination of mental health services for our children and families.

Last year, the initiative focused on supporting grass-roots, community-oriented projects that brought staff from different agencies and school boards together in the delivery of responsive mental health programs. In total, 16 projects received funds to implement programs. In addition, Dr. Philip Kendall, an internationally respected author, researcher and presenter in the area of “Anxiety” delivered training to over 500 staff from Health, Children and Youth Services, Education, and Community agencies over a 2 day period.

This year will be the final year of this initiative and we are building on the cross-sectoral relationships and facilitating training in the following areas:

Resiliency - A Social Ecological Approach to Nurturing Resilience across Cultures and Contexts

I'm A Great Little Kid, I'm A Great Kid – These are evidence-based, primary prevention programs that develop and strengthen healthy relationships by helping elementary students acquire skills and attributes that lessen their vulnerability to abuse and bullying

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) - The ASIST training is designed for caregivers who want to feel more comfortable, confident and competent in responding to the immediate risk of suicide

Relationship Skills for Violence Prevention - A program that provides support to teen girls by teaching skills to prevent violence

Walk a Mile in My Shoes - Provides participants with an opportunity to experience the emotional impact of having learning disabilities while also gaining an understanding of the nature of the challenges

Coping Cat - A cognitive-behavioral therapy intervention that helps children recognize and analyze anxious feelings and develop strategies to cope with anxiety-provoking situations

Service Statistics November 2012

	Psych.	Social Work	Attend.	SLP	OT/PT	Child & Youth Services
Referrals	5326	3777	1128	3353	852	850
Completed	1916	31	92	1197	113	33
Wait List	2006	231	106	921	83	0
In Progress	1040	3746	1036	1166	751	817

