



Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Meeting

MINUTES

June 2, 2014, 7:00 p.m.
5050 Yonge Street, Board Room

Members Present: Diana Avon, Heather Breckenridge, Aline Chan, Paul Cross, Clovis Grant, Debra Hayden, Trustee John Hastings, Olga Ingrahm, Trustee Howard Kaplan, Steven Lynette, Jean-Paul Ngana, Phillip Sargent, Najia Shafi, Trustee Sam Sotiropoulos, Cynthia Springings, Nancy Turner Wright

Alternates Present: Nora Green, Mitchell Curci

Regrets: Michelle Brick, Christina Buczek, Richard Carter, Ginny Pearce,

Staff Present: Uton Robinson, Anne Seymour, Cindy Burley, Margo Ratsep

Recorders: John Manalo and Margo Ratsep

Item	Business
1.	<p>Call to Order</p> <p>A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was convened at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, June 2, 2014 in the Board Room, 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario with Vice Chair John Hastings presiding as Chair.</p>
2.	<p>Approval of the Agenda</p> <p>*Motion: Trustee Howard Kaplan moved that the Agenda be approved as amended. The motion carried.</p>
3.	<p>Declarations of Possible Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>Phillip Sargent noted a possible conflict of interest with respect to item 9 on Bussing RFP, should voting be required.</p>
4.	<p>Confirmation of Minutes of May 5, 2014</p> <p>*Motion: Nora Green moved that the Minutes of May 5, 2014 be approved as amended, with the addition of additional information under item 6 (Dr. Swartzbein's presentation). The motion carried.</p>
5.	<p>Staff Presentation:</p> <p>SEAC received a presentation by TDSB Associate Counsel Wendy Lopez and Marcia Powers-Dunlop, Interim Senior Manager of Professional Support Services, on changes made to TDSB Policy PO45: Dealing with Abuse and Neglect of Students</p> <p>Members received a copy of the policy in advance. Wendy and Marcia provided the following additional information in response to questions:</p> <p>The policy was last reviewed in 1999 and was due for review. There was also a recommendation from the Baldwin Inquest, to raise awareness in response to evidence that there was a general lack of awareness on the part of the public that every person in society has a duty to report if a child is being neglected. The policy includes more elements than what was required in the legislation. For example, training is included which is not found in the legislation. In addition, the document discusses the internal consequences should someone fail to comply with the policy, from progressive discipline leading up to termination. Training of staff will commence in the fall and volunteers will be provided with information regarding the duty to report and where to find resources.</p>

6.	<p>Special Budget Consultation – Follow-up to May 22nd meeting</p> <p>A number of SEAC members formed a work group to address concerns raised at the special SEAC budget meeting held on May 22nd, regarding the Ministry of Education’s most recent budget cut to TDSB’s special education funding. The group presented a communication action plan and draft documents, seeking member support to act on behalf of SEAC. During discussion of the communication plan, suggestions were put forward by SEAC members regarding additional points to include in Ministry and parent communications.</p> <p>**Motion: Jean-Paul Ngana moved that SEAC approve in principle the direction in which the SEAC Budget Working Group plans to proceed in terms of communicating with all stakeholders (Ministry of Education, Trustees, member associations and parents) about the new TDSB budget shortfall brought about by March 2014 changes to the special education funding model.</p> <p>The motion carried.</p>
7.	<p>Open Discussion and Consultation</p> <p>1. Steven Lynette – Post Secondary Transition Planning</p> <p>Concern was expressed about the need to provide guidance to students who have not been formally identified as exceptional but are supported on IEP, when planning for transitions to postsecondary settings. It was noted that there are different eligibility requirements to access available supports at different postsecondary institutions. Many accept medical diagnoses as opposed to psychological assessments as evidence of need to access supports. Discussion covered the need for postsecondary transition planning to begin in the early years of secondary school. Cindy Burley confirmed that secondary special education staff is expected to take this into consideration during transition planning with students on IEPs. She also drew attention to a Transition Resource Guide available at the following link, which provides details specific to the different postsecondary settings:</p> <p>Link: http://www.transitionresourceguide.ca/</p> <p>2. Jean-Paul Ngana – Attendance Policy & Procedures Consultation</p> <p>Jean-Paul reported on his participation as SEAC representative at this consultation (also attended by SEAC members Nora Green and Ginny Pearce), mentioning shared concerns among participants about challenges faced in the implementation of the policy. He recommended that SEAC be consulted directly at a future meeting.</p> <p>**Staff Undertaking: Uton Robinson undertook to invite staff from the consultation work group to present at SEAC in the fall.</p> <p>3. Nora Green: Communication Tracker – Member Feedback</p> <p>Discussion covered the need for enhancement of SEAC’s role in advising the board on matters pertaining to delivery of special education programs and services in the TDSB. It was noted that PIAC representatives who regularly attend Ward meetings seem to be contacted more often by parents with concerns about special education programs/services, than are SEAC members. Since SEAC members in attendance at these meetings are also contacted, it was suggested that parents may find it easier to take concerns to the familiar faces seen at these meetings than to contact a listed but unfamiliar SEAC member. It is</p>

	<p>concerning to SEAC members that information from these kinds of contacts with PIAC representatives is not making its way to SEAC.</p> <p>**SEAC Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Member associations are to explore the addition of information to their own websites regarding who to contact with special education concerns. ➤ Members on the PIAC/SEAC Special Education Working Group are to explore ways to facilitate the communication of parent concerns from PIAC representatives to SEAC members. <p>4. Diana Avon – Minority Report on May 5, 2014 Gifted Assessment Motion SEAC received a Minority Report from Diana Avon, SEAC representative for the Association of Bright Children (ABC) (see page 5)</p>
8.	<p>Business Arising from the Minutes</p> <p>There was no business arising from the minutes.</p>
9.	<p>Trustee Reports and Follow-up on Previous Action Items</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update Regarding the April 7th, 2014 SEAC motion to Board re: Bussing RFP Trustees could not recall the specifics of the board decision on this topic. ** Staff Undertaking: Margo Ratsep undertook to update SEAC regarding its April 7, 2014 Motion to Board re: Bussing RFP. 2. John Hastings recommended the D Day display in the municipal building attached to 5050 Yonge Street, commemorating the contribution made by Canadians for the upcoming 70th Anniversary of D Day on June 6th.
10.	<p>Reports/Updates from Active SEAC Subcommittees</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special Education Plan Paul Cross reported that the Special Education Plan Subcommittee met prior to the SEAC meeting to review changes to the Plan for 2014-2015, which are generally to provide greater clarity and to update minor year-to-year changes. More changes are anticipated through June and will be reviewed with SEAC in September. Subcommittee members recommend that the department look for ways to provide in the report a more detailed picture about challenges being faced and successes achieved in program delivery. 2. PIAC/SEAC Special Education Parent Conference Margo Ratsep updated SEAC regarding planning for a 2014-2015 PIAC/SEAC Parent Conference. Planning is on hold until funding and staff logistics are confirmed. Chair Michelle Brick has applied for a Ministry of Education Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant as a possible source of funding and we are waiting for the response.
11.	<p>Special Education Department Updates</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anne Seymour - A Critical Pathway for Actions on Inclusion 2014-2015 Anne provided a brief synopsis of initial steps being taken. A Central Staff Steering Committee is meeting later this month to develop a draft plan for 2014-2015. The emphasis for 2014-2015 will be on internal research to identify existing best inclusionary practices in the TDSB, as well as, planning and implementing professional learning for school

	<p>administrators and school teams for all exceptionalities, at both elementary and secondary levels.</p> <p>2. Cindy Burley distributed an Executive Summary of TDSB Findings: Ministry of Education Survey on Implementation of PPM 140 (re: Autism Services) (See pages 6-7)</p> <p>*Motion by Phillip Sargent to extend the meeting by 15 minutes was approved.</p> <p>3. Uton Robinson announced the retirement of Cindy Burley, giving recognition to and thanking her for her many years of invaluable contribution to special education as a passionate champion of children with special needs in the Toronto District School Board. On behalf of SEAC and trustees, Vice Chair John Hastings expressed appreciation and best wishes to Cindy for a happy retirement.</p>
12.	<p>Correspondence Received by the Chair</p> <p>1. Email dated May 13, 2014 from Nancy Obando re: request to present a delegation at SEAC re: an operational matter</p> <p>2. Email dated May 14, 2014 from Michelle Munroe, Central Coordinator, TDSB Parent and Community Engagement re: Information sharing about the 7th Annual Parent Involvement Makes a Difference Conference</p> <p>3. Letter dated May 17, 2014 from Giselle Murdoch, SEAC Coordinator for the Association for Bright Children of Ontario (ABC) re: nomination of Catherine Drillis as ABC Alternate Representative to replace Krystyna Ross, who has resigned.</p> <p>***Motion to the Board: In response to item 3, Paul Cross moved that SEAC recommend that the board accept the resignation of Krystyna Ross and appoint Catherine Drillis as Alternate Representative of the Association of Bright Children (ABC).</p> <p>The motion passed.</p>
13.	<p>New Business</p> <p>1. VOICE representative Paul Cross submitted a report (See page 8)</p> <p>2. Brain Injury Society Toronto representative Cynthia Sprigings reminded everyone that June is Brain Injury Awareness Month</p> <p>3. Epilepsy Toronto representative Steven Lynette reminded members about the 15th Annual Scotiabank Buskerfest in August, in which Epilepsy Toronto participates.</p>
14.	<p>Agenda Setting for Future Meetings</p> <p>September: - No member presentation will be planned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary Accommodations for Executive Function & Exit Transition Planning - Police Records Check Policy and/or Attendance Policy and Procedures - Road Map to Greater Inclusion <p>October: - Member Presentation: VOICE</p>
15.	<p>Adjournment</p> <p>*Motion: Howard Kaplan moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m.</p>

SEAC Minority Report

Submitted by: Diana Avon
Association for Bright Children of Ontario

Re: Motion in the May 5, 2014 Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Toronto District School Board, stating the following:

“Michelle Brick moved that it be noted in the minutes that SEAC finds the process used by the TDSB to screen for giftedness inequitable in comparison to other exceptionalities.”

The above member of SEAC disagrees with this motion and has filed a Minority Report to provide a record of her disagreement with the motion:

Given that the number of professional staff able to administer an Intelligence Test such as the WISC 4 is inadequate to meet needs of all students with special education needs at the TDSB.

There are many more families who need a psycho-educational assessment than are staff available at the TDSB to do them when they are requested. There are significant waiting lists and some families wait for more than a year to obtain a full psycho-educational evaluation.

However, the Gifted Intensive Support Program requires that the students who attend this ISP must have a minimum score on an internationally recognized Intelligence test in order to be placed in the program. There are no other ways to be placed in this program. While a few families pay for their children to be tested privately, without the Gifted testing done by the TDSB, there would be far fewer lower and middle SES families accessing the program.

The gifted testing at the TDSB involves a number of subtests from the WISC4. It is in no way a complete psycho-educational assessment, and is much quicker to administer than a complete psycho-educational assessment.

Some of the other ISP programs have other paths to access their programs.

In conclusion, we ask the Board of Trustees to consider these issues carefully and to: Leave the Gifted Assessments as they are, as a quick way to identify the cohort of gifted students each year. Otherwise, the number of lower SES families able to access the Gifted Program will drop.

Promote the gifted program in lower SES schools in order to improve equity for families who might not be aware of the program.

To look for a cost-effective means of testing all students in grade 1 for learning disabilities, giftedness and other issues that might impact the students' ability to access the curriculum.

Signed by:

Diana Avon
SEAC Representative, Association for Bright Children of Ontario

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Autism Services
PPM 140 Survey Results
2013/2014

One of the requirements of the Implementation of PPM 140 is that the Ministry Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) and the Autism Reference Panel receive updates on the provincial implementation. Once again, school boards were asked to provide their schools with a provincial survey on the Implementation of PPM 140. The Ministry of Education provided the survey to the school boards and asked that the questions not be adjusted. Results were sent back to the Ministry for their distribution.

Summary of TDSB Survey Findings:

The following data represents surveys completed in April 2014.
There were 382 respondents to the survey.

The percentages noted indicate a response of “all or most of the time” and an increase from 2012/2013 results:

- 91.1%, students’ programs incorporated relevant ABA methods, **increase of 5.4%**
- 97.91%, students’ programs are based on relevant assessment information, **increase of 4.67%**
- 98.43%, in developing the IEP, special education program and service options that will best take into account the students individual strengths and areas of need in the demonstration of learning are considered, **increase of 10.2%**
- 96.3%, students’ programs are individualized and instruction strategies are uniquely suited to each student’ learning strengths and needs, **increase of 35%**

The percentages noted below indicate those questions that scored the lowest responses for “all or most of the time”:

- 70% of participants noted that Functional Assessments are used, however this question does not take into consideration that Functional Assessments are not always needed. An answer of “no” may actually be very positive. A reduction of Functional Assessments may indicate a reduction of behaviours that require this intensive form of data collection.
- 64% of staff working with students with ASD share their expertise with other staff in the school, between schools, within the family of schools and throughout the board.
- 69%, students are involved in selecting transition techniques. Although this percentage is one of the lower numbers, it is an increase of 4% from the previous year. This question does not clarify if students who could be involved were not involved; or rather students who could be involved were not included in their transition planning.

Next Steps:

The data from the past five years indicates a slow and steady increase in all of the goals as outlined by the Ministry. Participants noted that 89% of the time the answers to each question were “all or most of the time”.

Our approach to supporting students with Autism Spectrum Disorders will continue. We will build capacity in the use of strategies and tools that support the effective development of programming for students with ASD. The emphasis will continue to be on transferring best practices to classroom use and incorporating meaningful goals, strategies and assessment methods into the students’ IEPs. The focus will continue to be on using both the student’s needs and strengths to develop programming. Transition planning will be highlighted as a need for all students, including those with ASD. Input into the roll out of PPM 156 will be significant and meaningful in addressing the overlapping goals from PPM 140. Involvement of multidisciplinary teams will be encouraged through existing and new protocols. Professional Learning Opportunities, both formal and informal, large group and in-class will be provided in all areas related to ASD.

SEAC Association Report

Re: Voice for Hearing Impaired Children

From: Paul Cross

1. VOICE held its annual parent conference May 3/14 here in Toronto. I participated in a panel discussion about Voice representation on SEACs across Ontario, in which current SEAC members shared some experiences and reflections on successes, and encouraged newer members of the organization to consider representing Voice on their local SEAC when the next opportunity arises. TDSB SEAC renewal takes place this fall.
2. I represented both VOICE and our SEAC at the TDSB Hearing Itinerant Program parents' night May 1/14 at Eastern Commerce Cl. (Thanks to Margo for having the SEAC display sent over!) Parents of children entering TDSB schools in the fall – typically in JK – received information about programs and services for children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. I'm always impressed by the caring and dedication of teachers in the Hearing Itinerant program.
3. The VOICE education committee will be discussing the May 7 cuts to Special Education funding during its next meeting, June 4/14.