



**COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Committee Name:** Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

**Date:** Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

**Present:** Diana Avon, Paula Boutis, Alexander Brown, Richard Carter, Aline Chan, Paul Cross, Catherine Drillis, Deborah Fletcher, Tiffany Ford, Clovis Grant, Nora Green, Olga Ingrahm, Lisa Kness, David Lapofsky, Steven Lynette, Michelle McDonald, Diane Montgomery, Ken Stein

**Regrets:** Adebukola Adenowo-Akpan, Jordan Glass, Howard Kaplan, Mark Kovats, Jean-Paul Ngana, Phillip Sargent, Cynthia Sprigings,

**Staff:** Uton Robinson, Jeff Hainbuch, Ian Allison, Margo Ratsep

**Guests:**

**Recorder:** Margo Ratsep

| ITEM  | DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS / MOTIONS   | DECISIONS         |
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| 1. <b>Call to Order/Quorum</b>                          | A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was convened at 7:00 pm on Monday, October 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2015 in the Board Room, 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario with Steven Lynette presiding as Chair.   |                   |
| 2. <b>Approval of Agenda</b>                            | <b>Motion:</b> Aline Chan moved that the agenda be approved as amended, moving Item 7 Business Arising from the September Minutes forward on the agenda to just after Item 3. The motion carried.  | Agenda approved   |
| 3. <b>Declaration of Possible Conflicts of Interest</b> | None noted.  |                   |
| 7. <b>Business Arising from the September Minutes</b>   | <p><b>Coverage By and Participation of Alternate Community Representatives</b></p> <p>Steven Lynette proposed that SEAC consider the two proposals related to community representative alternates carried forward from the September meeting, recommending that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence coverage for Community Representatives by the two available alternates be organised by region so that the SW alternate cover for all West region community reps and the East be similarly covered by the one alternate (once appointed)</li> <li>• SEAC permit the non-voting participation of Alternates at meetings, even when they are not attending as a replacement for a community representative</li> </ul> <p>Following a brief discussion, both proposals were adopted.</p> | Proposals adopted |
| 4. <b>Confirmation of Minutes</b>                       | <b>Motion:</b> David Lepofsky moved that the Minutes of the September 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2015 meeting be approved as amended, with the addition of a statement to confirm SEAC's adoption of the proposed list of SEAC priorities. The motion carried.   | Minutes approved  |

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| <p><b>5. Presentations/Delegations</b></p> | <p><b>Presentations/Delegations/Consultations</b></p> <p><b>Consultation on the 2015-2016 Special Education Plan</b></p> <p>Executive Superintendent Uton Robinson explained that the Special Education Plan provides complete details about how special education programs and services are delivered in the TDSB and is shared on-line in its entirety for public reference. Although it is a Ministry of Education required document, it is also used extensively by staff for checking on special education policies and procedures and outlines board expectations so that practice can be consistent across the system. He welcomed this opportunity for SEAC to provide additional input to the revised 2015 Special Education Plan, with a goal to improve staff and parent understanding of the material, to better address concerns brought forward about the Plan and how clearly it communicates with parents about Special Education in the TDSB.</p> <p><b>Discussion and SEAC Input/Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Special Education Plan needs to be presented through a very focussed lens on inclusion and enabling environments – so that parents are well-informed about the pathways and their anticipated outcomes</li> <li>• Parents need a roadmap illustrating different pathways – a kind of decision-making tree. While there is recognition that intervention pathways do not predetermine all outcomes, parents need to know what the outcomes are from program decisions, including outcomes that are not transparent in the plan. (i.e. Which programs lead to a diploma, and which don't, and specifically how student achievement will be moved forward for students in intensive support programs, to facilitate their return to the main stream.)</li> <li>• The board needs to provide more user friendly, transparent information to parents. The Special Education Plan is a bureaucratic document filed with the provincial government, who holds the board accountable. Such a complex, detailed document is less useful for parents to read through to find answers.</li> <li>• There is appreciation that an effort was made to improve the Plan to try to address earlier SEAC suggestions, but more improvement is needed. The Exceptionalities section provides descriptions that do not accurately represent intensive support programs such as MID and DD programs. Since these ISP classes tend to have students with different exceptionalities who have need for similar kinds of supports, the focus should be on the degree and kinds of support available in a program, under a more neutral name, rather than describing programs by a named exceptionality.</li> <li>• Students with intellectual disabilities are not given the opportunity to develop as fully as possible. Right now, there isn't a strong connection between school experience and life outside school after age 21. These students are having to enter the world at age 21, but are not treated as part of the world when in school.</li> <li>• Once students are in a DD program, chances of moving into other placements are too limited. Parents need to know the ramifications of their choices. (i.e. "If you select a DD</li> </ul> |  |
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|  | <p>program, there is no provincial curriculum.”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placement decisions should be made based on inclusion. For students with intellectual disabilities, the question should be: “What would be the harm of placement in the mainstream class?”</li> <li>• Assumptions are made about the degree of training staff in special education programs receive. To teach special education, teachers only need Part 1 Additional Qualification in Special Education. While there is great respect for teachers who choose to teach special education, the training does not prepare teachers for all exceptionalities. Parents should not be led to believe there are expert teachers in the ISP, unless that is a fact.</li> <li>• A shift in attitude has to take place because there is mainstream resistance to inclusion. Teachers and principals may sincerely think the kids are better off in the ISP. Parents are being told “We don’t have the support your child needs in the regular classroom.”</li> <li>• There needs to be greater ownership of special education and differentiated instruction in every home school so that inclusion becomes the accepted norm. We should be asking “How can we best support the child in the regular classroom?” The focus needs to be: “What are the needs of the child? What supports are needed? How do we deliver that?”</li> <li>• Meeting the individual needs of children in the home school should be included in teacher and principal performance evaluation.</li> <li>• It is difficult to provide differentiation for all children in the classroom, with its huge ability range and different kinds of needs across the spectrum. Teachers need more support. More time needs to be spent with staff in schools on professional learning about differentiated instruction and special education issues. A few minutes at a monthly staff meeting is not enough.</li> <li>• Differentiation is exceptionality specific and teachers have to have a good understanding of the exceptionality involved to be able to differentiate effectively.</li> <li>• Grouping of kids for some kinds of subject instruction based on academic needs, so that classroom composition can be fluid, may be one way to address the different needs.</li> <li>• The heart and interest has to be there to uncover the potential of the student. The most enabling environment (congregated or inclusive) requires a paradigm shift. We need to have the foundation and we need to listen more to each other on how we can go about doing that.</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions Raised by SEAC Members for Possible Future Exploration:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When looking at how to do things differently, how do we achieve at a higher level with less by way of resources?</li> <li>• How should we assess achievement...one student against that of another student, or focus on students achieving at their individual highest level?</li> <li>• How do we take the Special Education Plan and create something very simple for parents to understand, as opposed to, for example, the book on IEPs?</li> <li>• What are the positive ways TDSB can include parents and children in decision-making?</li> <li>• In the passages of the Special Education Plan that talk about different ISPs, reference is</li> </ul> |  |
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|  | <p>made to kids with Physical Disabilities not needing a congregated intensive support program. How does that fit with accessibility across the TDSB? We need to look more closely at accessibility.</p> <p><b>Staff Response to Discussion and Input</b></p> <p>During the discussion and in answer to questions, Uton Robinson, Jeff Hainbuch and Ian Allison shared the following information about steps being taken around inclusion:</p> <p>Throughout the IST-SST-IPRC-ISP process – we are working to shift the conversation to begin with “How is that child being supported in the regular class?” The challenge is in how we do this effectively in such a large system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The conversation began with the Special Education team, whose members work with Family of School Superintendents and attend the their leadership meetings where the conversation continues</li> <li>• There are monthly teleconferences with Principals to talk about inclusion initiatives (such as the Primary focus last year and the Grade 4 to 8 focus this year), to learn about challenges and solutions, and to guide them in leading those discussions at the school level</li> <li>• There are bi-monthly meetings with superintendents, where inclusion is regularly discussed – monitoring what kinds of supports are being provided and how needs are being addressed in the schools</li> <li>• TDSB has data that points out that in many of our ISP class rooms we do not see a closing of the achievement gap. In some cases, it is widening. That evidence supports why we are working at changing past practice.</li> <li>• We face some challenges – the current range and structure of programs is presenting some difficulty. Nor are we equitable in how placements in the ISPs are made.</li> <li>• The constant conversations with all the people involved (including front line teachers, administrators, consultants, etc.), is that we can do things better because the status quo isn’t working. We need to do something different.</li> <li>• We anticipate improved entry level training, with the College of Teachers moving to a two year program.</li> <li>• There is on-going professional learning at leadership team meetings, focused on the kinds of rich, authentic, engaging tasks teachers should be giving students (taking it off the paper).</li> <li>• Many teachers do offer differentiated instruction, but we can do better. Our coordinators and consultants work with FOS superintendents in targeted, professional learning with school staffs. However, we have been challenged recently with the employee job action.</li> <li>• We need to look at effective instruction for all TDSB students. When we place labels on certain students, we become complacent around progress and limit ability by our attitudes. Unfortunately, when students are placed in certain classrooms, the expectations change. The composition of the class may be different but the instruction ends up the same for all. This has to change.</li> </ul> |  |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well-being is critical. We want to ensure that student success is tied to a sense of belonging in a particular classroom, be that regular or special education. We believe students can feel and do better in an enabling environment within a more inclusive model.</li> </ul> <p>Uton Robinson thanked SEAC members for their input and explained that the experiences and perspectives outlined are aspects the TDSB continues to work towards improving. He affirmed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many of the ideas expressed describe where TDSB wants to go – including that the home school be the most enabling environment for all students.</li> <li>TDSB is already moving towards greater levels of inclusion, especially where it is the most enabling environment.</li> <li>There is still parent choice to consider, so options must continue to be available.</li> <li>TDSB intensive support programs continue to have credibility in their ability to meet the complex needs of many students.</li> </ul> <p><b>Follow-up Actions</b></p> <p><i>Uton Robinson undertook to make arrangements to describe to SEAC the various processes followed and the intended outcomes across the board</i></p> <p><i>Ian Allison undertook to provide SEAC with information about the numbers and locations of accessible schools and designated sites across the system.</i></p> |  |
| <p><b>6. SEAC Business &amp; Open Discussion</b></p> | <p><b>6.1 SEAC Priority Setting and Action Plan for 2015-2016</b></p> <p>At the September meeting, SEAC adopted the List of Priorities proposed by the SEAC Priorities Working Group. David Lepofsky spoke to the draft Action Plan developed by the SEAC Priorities Work Group for SEAC to consider, condensing the notes to the following Action steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt one of the 4 Priorities to begin with (and proposing the adoption of Priority 1)</li> <li>Gather and absorb information – Staff to provide a thorough briefing on the chosen topic</li> <li>Reach out to the public for input about their experience</li> <li>Brainstorm, discuss and debate ideas around the table</li> <li>Distill ideas and formulate recommendations – possibly by way of a smaller work group</li> </ol> <p>He opened discussion by proposing SEAC adoption of the Action Plan and starting with Priority 1</p>  |  |

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|  | <p><b>Discussion on Action Plan</b></p> <p>Members offered the following input during discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By adopting the four priorities and proposed Action Plan, SEAC would be moving into a research and discussion phase, which is very valuable. The result will be an interesting process of discovery, the building of a good body of evidence to make suggestions and the development of lots of ideas.</li> <li>• There is interest in looking more closely at the IST/SST process</li> <li>• Would like to include PPM 156 Transition Plan in Priority 1 (Move Priority listed as 2e to Priority 1)</li> <li>• 2 things missing – What service does the child require and tie that into what is in the Special Education Plan.</li> <li>• There is the need to set a timeline for proceeding and to ask the board to assist in how to reach out to families for feedback (i.e. through Trustee Ward meetings), with a goal to begin formulating ideas in January.</li> </ul> <p>David Lepofsky provided a synopsis of the focus for Priority 1, describing the priority as premised on what is available to kids based on their needs. Questions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does TDSB say they do?</li> <li>• What does the board do to tell parents what's available and how to get it for their kids?</li> <li>• What does the board do to decide what support children will get and what can parents do if they disagree?</li> <li>• Do regional differences have an impact?</li> </ul> <p>Following discussion Paul Cross moved:</p> <p><b><i>That SEAC start with Priority 1 and adopt the proposed Action Plan.</i></b> The motion carried</p> <p><b>Follow-up Actions</b></p> <p><i>Uton Robinson undertook to arrange for briefings to SEAC on topics listed under Priority 1</i></p> <p><i>Margo Ratsep undertook to forward to members a copy of PPM 156</i></p> <p><b>6.2 PIAC-SEAC Conference</b></p> <p>On behalf of SEAC last spring, Steven Lynette submitted a Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant application to the Ministry of Education to assist with funding the PIAC-SEAC Parent Conference but received no response. PIAC also applied and received a grant of \$13500. As was done last year, Director Donna Quan approved an additional \$15000 in funding, so there is sufficient to plan a conference. The date proposed is April 2, 2016 with an alternative as April 9 (pending permit</p> | <p>SEAC adopted the Action Plan and Priority 1</p> |
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|   | <p>availability). It is planned to take place again at Earl Haig Collegiate. More support on the Planning Committee is needed from SEAC members. Nora and Clovis have been involved previously. The first planning meeting takes place on October 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:45 pm in the cafeteria.</p> <p><b>Follow-up Actions</b><br/> <i>Lisa Kness and Aline Chan volunteered to work on the Conference Planning Committee.</i><br/> <i>Margo Ratsep undertook to forward meeting information to them.</i></p>   |  |
| <p><b>7. Business Arising</b></p>   | <p>This item was moved forward on the agenda and addressed following Item 3.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>8. Trustee Reports &amp; Follow-Up on Previous Action Items</b></p> | <p><b>Trustee Brown</b> reported that he sits on the Policy Review Work Group, which is tasked with overseeing reviews of Board Policies. They are developing a proposed schedule to review all policies over a 4 year cycle. With approximately 78 policies, the schedule will propose reviewing approximately 20 each year over 4 years. He undertook to provide SEAC with the schedule and suggested SEAC should be able to have input in the policies as they relate to special education.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>9. Reports/Updates from Active SEAC Subcommittees</b></p>           | <p>None reported</p>  |  |
| <p><b>10. Special Education Department Updates</b></p>                    | <p>Uton Robinson, Jeff Hainbuch and Ian Allison provided department updates and responded to questions (See Department Update starting on page 10)</p> <p>Feedback following Ian Allison’s update on Pupil Accommodation Reviews :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents need to know about program changes early in the process, well before decisions are made. There needs to be a process for reaching all parents, especially single parents or those who are non-resident to the neighbourhood school – to be “aggressively user-friendly”.</li> <li>• SEAC should be told about proposed changes ahead of time, so it can provide input as part of the consultation process.</li> </ul> <p><b>Follow-up Actions</b><br/> <i>Uton Robinson undertook to provide SEAC with a copy of the Special Education Checklist for Administrators.</i><br/> <i>Trustee Brown undertook to provide the exact times and locations of the neighbourhood consultation meetings.</i></p> <p>In response to questions, Uton Robinson and Ian Allison shared information about IEP timelines. The Ministry of Education has indicated that teachers are continuing to complete IEPs during the course of the instructional day and may not meet the deadline. Teachers can withdraw any or all services and it is not ‘business as usual’. The Ministry is monitoring the situation and will provide direction closer to October 20<sup>th</sup>. There will be parent communication forthcoming. Because they</p> |  |

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|                                 | are a statutory requirement, IPRCs are continuing.  |  |
| <b>11. Correspondence</b>       | SEAC received no correspondence since the September meeting.  |  |
| <b>12. Member Announcements</b> | No member announcements were made<br>9:00 p.m. having been reached, a motion by Richard Carter to extend the meeting to 9:15 carried.   |  |
| <b>13. New Business</b>         | <p><b>1. Advocacy re HNA Funding as per Upper Canada DSB Letter (Trustee Brown)</b><br/>Trustee Brown spoke briefly to the copy of a letter from Upper Canada DSB SEAC to the Minister of Education, about the planned decrease in the Special Education HNA.</p> <p><b>Follow-up Action</b><br/><i>Uton Robinson undertook to have Craig Snider include this information for the next meeting and to request that Craig provide his information in an accessible format, well in advance of the November SEAC meeting.</i></p> <p><b>2. Optional Attendance</b><br/>In response to a question about the right of students to attend the same school as a sibling placed in an intensive support program, Superintendent Allison clarified that siblings of students placed in an ISP may apply for optional attendance at the same school, only as Optional Attendance guidelines apply. In response to a question about transportation, he confirmed that a non-placed sibling able to register under optional attendance would not qualify to receive bussing.</p> <p><b>Follow-up Action</b><br/><i>Ian Allison undertook to provide to SEAC the dates for closure to Optional Attendance</i></p> |  |
| <b>3. Agenda Setting</b>        | <p><b>November 2, 2015</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Education Budget (Craig Snider, TDSB Comptroller) – A request was made to provide presentation information in advance, not as a PPT but as a word document in an accessible and user friendly format;</li> <li>• Epilepsy presentation</li> <li>• Staff to begin Priority 1 presentations</li> </ul> <p><b>Follow-up Action</b><br/><i>Margo Ratsep undertook to resubmit SEAC questions to Mr. Snider and to request that he bring public Ministry information about Special Education dollar amounts to compare with the TDSB expenditure breakdown.</i></p> <p><b>Future Presentation/Consultation Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistive Technology Strategy</li> <li>• Sense of Belonging Research</li> </ul>  |  |

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|                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Education Support Staff</li> <li>• Refusal to Admit, Suspensions and Expulsions</li> <li>• Mental Health Strategy</li> <li>• Executive Summary – results from the PPM 140 Survey (Jan Fukumoto, Central Coordinator for ASD Programs)</li> <li>• Census Data</li> <li>• Invite TDSB award recipients (from Winchester and Vanier) to speak to SEAC (Dec?)</li> </ul> |                          |
| <p><b>2. Adjournment</b></p> | <p>Richard Carter moved adjournment at 9:15. The motion carried.</p>  | <p>Meeting adjourned</p> |

**Future Meeting Dates:** November 2, December 14, January 11 (To be confirmed)

## Special Education Department Update

### Uton Robinson

**Special Education Checklist** – This has been shared with Principals and Superintendents of Schools, to ensure all administrators are fully informed about special education policies, procedures and expectations, and to address consistency across the system.

**Nonviolent Crisis Intervention** – In keeping with **Students With Special Needs: Management Process For Risk-Of-Injury Behaviours (Procedure 699)** and a lot of what outside agencies are already doing, we are moving away from use of Behaviour Management System (BMS) 'crisis management' strategies to those of the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI), for more effective, nonviolent crisis prevention and intervention. Training is to commence soon, with full day training provided through our trained CYWs and staff from the Health and Safety Office.

### Ian Allison – Pupil Accommodation Reviews (PARTs)

TDSB has a number of Pupil Accommodation Reviews taking place. Each PART has a local feasibility team, which consists of the administrative staff of the schools involved in the PART, the area Superintendent of Schools, the area Trustee, area school council chair reps and Planning Department staff. All come together to look at the challenges of pupil accommodation for the area. The teams review all the information provided by the Planning and discuss perspectives offered from program areas such as Teaching and Learning and Special Education and develop possible options to bring forward to the public for their feedback. Public meetings are held, including the families in the immediate area of the schools affected. Typically, a recommended plan or option is presented by staff while the other possible options are also reviewed. The public meetings are followed by an opportunity for staff to review the feedback from the public meetings, to develop a recommendation to go forward for board approval. Currently there are reviews in ER 17, ER18, WR 8 and WR 10. PARTs can impact on programs that occur in those areas. There may be a need for grade reconfigurations, and or program shifts (e.g. French Immersion, Special Education, external partners to TDSB etc.) ER17 involves AY Jackson/Junior HS cluster; ER18 involves Georges Vanier/Don Valley/Woodbine cluster; WR8 involves Yonge and Eglinton schools and WR10 involves Danforth area schools.

### Jeff Hainbuch – Elementary Job Action

We have been having regular teleconferences with field superintendents about impacts in the schools from the current job action. Schools remain committed to health and safety and support for students with special education needs. Schools have been able to find solutions to the majority of challenges brought by job actions and we are in direct contact with schools and parents as needed to facilitate solutions.