



Toronto District School Board  
**COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Name:** Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)  
**Date:** Monday, March 2, 2015  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
**Present:** Diana Avon, Paula Boutis, Alexander Brown, Richard Carter, Aline Chan, Paul Cross, Deborah Fletcher, Tiffany Ford, Jordan Glass, Clovis Grant, Nora Green, Olga Ingrahm, Howard Kaplan, Lisa Kness, Mark Kovats, Steven Lynette, Michelle McDonald, Jean-Paul Ngana, Phillip Sargent, Cynthia Sprigings  
**Staff:** Anne Seymour, Uton Robinson, Margo Ratsep, Jeff Hainbuch  
**Recorder:** John Manalo and Margo Ratsep

ITEM	DISCUSSION	RECOMMENDATION/ MOTION
1. <b>Call to Order/Quorum</b>	A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was convened at 7:10 pm on Monday, March 2, 2015 in the Board Room, 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario with Steven Lynette presiding as Chair. Quorum was achieved at 7:10 pm.	
2. <b>Approval of Agenda</b>	Motion: Jean-Paul Ngana moved that the agenda be approved as amended. All in favour.	Motion carried.
3. <b>Declaration of Possible Conflicts of Interest</b>	None received.	
4. <b>Confirmation of Minutes</b>	Motion: Paul Cross moved that the minutes from February 9, 2014 be approved. All in favour.	Motion carried
5. <b>Review of SEAC Mandate and Meeting Protocol</b>	Steven Lynette reviewed SEAC's legislated mandate as outlined in Regulation 464/97 and meeting expectations for attendance and quorum. He reminded members of the board requirement that each Community Advisory Committee develop a Code of Conduct for members, consistent with Board policies and procedures. Members were provided with a copy of the existing Board Code of Conduct – Operational Procedure PR585 and Steven suggested members review the document to see if its adoption would meet SEAC's requirements.  <b><i>ACTION: SEAC members to review the Operational Procedure PR585 and decide at the April meeting if they would like to adopt it as the SEAC Code of Conduct.</i></b>	
6. <b>Member Introductions</b>	In light of several new representatives, members introduced themselves around the table as a way of getting to know one another.	

<p><b>7. Presentations/Delegations</b></p>	<p>Richard Carter gave a presentation about the services provided by the volunteer organization Down Syndrome Association of Toronto, giving examples such as community and parent support programs, conferences for parents, education for health care and other professionals, summer camps and special events for people of all ages and disabilities. He also provided information about the genetic disorder of Down Syndrome and its impact. He reminded members of World Down Syndrome Day on March 21, 2015 and Down Syndrome Awareness Week from November 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015.</p>	
<p><b>8. SEAC Business &amp; Open Discussion</b></p>	<p><b>Special Education Budget Shortfall – SEAC Advocacy Strategy (Members)</b></p> <p>Discussion covered the inadequacy of the Ministry of Education funding formula for special education and its anticipated impact on TDSB programs and services. Members agreed on the need for political advocacy to seek appropriate levels of funding to meet special education needs. Cuts to special education staffing are anticipated and members expressed the need to know more specific information in order to be able to advocate for increased funding. Members agreed they need to be able to look at the funding received and describe how it hurts the provision of programs and services.</p> <p><b>Action: Staff to provide specific data requested by members so they can know how much money is received and how is it spent.</b></p> <p>Members are to send requests to the SEAC Liaison. As examples, members requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average numbers of students in ISPs by exceptionality and grade</li> <li>• How many students are not full day due to lack of needed support</li> <li>• How often are students sent home due to absent support</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: Craig Snider to be asked to present more specific information about special education funding and how it is spent, at the April SEAC meeting.</b></p> <p><b>Motion: On motion of Nora Green, that the SEAC Chair write a letter inviting Barry Finlay or his representative from the Ministry of Education Special Education Policy and Program Branch to attend a SEAC meeting and explain the changes to the special education High Needs Amount Funding formula as it impacts on TDSB.</b></p> <p>All in favour.</p>	<p>Motion carried.</p>
<p><b>9. Business Arising</b></p>	<p><b>Business from the February Meeting:</b></p> <p><b>Item 6.2 – Working Group on Concussion</b> The following members volunteered: Cynthia Sprigings, Michelle McDonald, Richard Carter, Jordan Glass</p> <p><b>Item 7.2 – Volunteers for Parent Conference</b> The following members volunteered to facilitate at the PIAC SEAC Parent Conference: Richard, Olga, Lisa Kness</p>	

	<p><b>Item 8: Communication Tracker</b> Members are asked to retain their collected data until September. Nora Green will send a revised template to the SEAC Liaison for distribution to members.</p> <p><b>Item 11.2: Assistive Technology Conference</b> Jeff Hainbuch invited SEAC members to indicate interest in 5 spaces at the “Reaching All Learners” Assistive Technology Conference being held on March 26<sup>th</sup> at the Delta Scarborough on Kennedy Road from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m: Paula Boutis, Richard Carter, Nora Green, Jordan Glass, Aline Chan (Lisa Kness on standby)</p> <p><b>Item 13.3: Ministry of Education working group on Redefinition of Gifted Program</b> At SEAC’s request, Uton Robinson looked into this and no information has come to TDSB regarding consultation or input into this Ministry working group. It is working on a redefinition of the Giftedness Exceptionality. No information is anticipated until the Fall. Concern was voiced that stakeholders such as TDSB should be engaged in this kind of effort.</p>	
<p><b>10. Trustee Reports &amp; Follow-Up on Previous Action Items</b></p>	<p>Trustee Ford notified members that all trustees have a central line rather than a direct line for public contact.</p> <p>Discussion indicated that SEAC would like to hear more from trustees about board business pertaining to special education. It was requested that this topic be added to the April agenda to generate ideas about the kind of information SEAC would like to hear from trustees.</p>	
<p><b>11. Reports/Updates from Active SEAC Subcommittees</b></p>	<p>No active committees to report</p>	
<p><b>12. Special Education Department Updates</b></p>	<p>Uton Robinson provided a Department Update (see page 5)</p> <p>Jeff Hainbuch thanked SEAC members for their input into the Acceptable Use Policy and has taken note of their questions. The Policy is tracking to the board for April. He offered to return to SEAC in May or June with TDSB Chief Technology Officer Peter Singh.</p>	
<p><b>13. Correspondence</b></p>	<p>The following correspondence was received by the Chair:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Email dated February 10, 2015 from Barry Finlay, Director, Special Education Policy and Programs Branch, Ministry of Education, to SEAC Chair re (a) Invitation to Provincial SEAC Conference, and (b) presentation proposal form</li> <li>2. Letter dated January 26, 2015 from Minister of Education Liz Sandals re Welcome to New SEAC Chair</li> <li>3. Copy of letter dated February 6, 2015 to Minister of Education Liz Sandals from Kate O’Donnell, SEAC Chair for Grand Erie DSB re Ontario Regulation 274/12 Teacher</li> </ol>	

	<p>Hiring Practices</p> <p>4. Copy of letter dated February 6, 2015 to Minister of Education Liz Sandals from Evelyn Swanson, SEAC Chair for Renfrew County DSB re Ontario Regulation 274/12 Teacher Hiring Practices</p>	
<b>14. New Business</b>	<p>1. Correspondence Item 1 – Invitation to the Ministry of Education SEAC Conference Up to 5 members may go to the Provincial SEAC conference, including among them the Chair, a new member, an experienced member, a trustee. Steven indicated his willingness to attend. Other interested members are asked to let Steven know. Those who participate are asked to report back at the June meeting.</p> <p>2. Correspondence Items 3 and 4 – Regulation 274/12</p> <p>3. Member Association Special Event reminders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 21 is World Down Syndrome Day</li> <li>• March 26 is Purple Day for Epilepsy Awareness.</li> <li>• April 2 is Autism Awareness Day</li> </ul> <p>4. An expression of thanks was accorded Uton Robinson, for his comments on the importance of parent involvement at the recent PIAC Appreciation event.</p>	
<b>15. Agenda Setting</b>	<p><b>Agenda Setting for Future Meetings</b></p> <p><b>April</b> Staff Presentation: Budget Consultation (Craig Snider) Open Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Hiring Practices In response to Correspondence related to teacher hiring practices, discussion on Ontario Regulation 274/12 Teacher Hiring Practice and TDSB Hiring Practice.)</li> <li>• Role of Trustee and Opportunity to inform SEAC about board special education business (Open Discussion)</li> <li>• Assistive Technology Conference Report</li> </ul> <p><b>May</b> Member Presentation: Brain Injury Society of Toronto Staff Presentation: Sense of Belonging research (Gillian Parekh) Open Discussion: Acceptable Use Procedures (Jeff Hainbuch and Peter Singh)</p> <p><b>Outstanding Topics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistive Technology Strategy</li> <li>• Refusal to Admit</li> <li>• Mental Health Strategy</li> <li>• Special Education Support Staff</li> </ul>	
<b>16. Adjournment</b>	<p>**Motion: Clovis Grant moved to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 9:10pm.</p>	

**Next Meeting Date:** April 13, 2015

## **Uton Robinson – Special Education Department Update**

### **Inclusion – One Size Does Not Fit All**

At the Toronto District School Board we continue to actively review how we address the special education needs of our students and explore new ways to support them.

We know that students with exceptionalities have the same basic needs as their peers.

They need to:

- Participate and be included as fully as possible in all activities, curricular and co-curricular, of our school communities;
- Be valued as individuals for their unique contributions to school life;
- Have no boundaries placed on, or prejudgments made about, their capacity for learning,
- Enjoy a safe and secure learning environment;
- Enjoy a sense of belonging to a school community that accepts ownership and responsibility for their learning; and,
- Be unencumbered by stereotypical, outdated perspectives on abilities and disabilities.

Last year, the Board released a research report titled, [A Case for Inclusive Education](#) (Parekh, 2013). This report explores the concept of inclusivity – where all students across a spectrum of needs successfully learn side-by-side – a model we are working towards.

Although placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services is always the first consideration for student support, we also recognize that inclusivity is not for all students. In some cases, students may have needs that require more intensive support. While working with parents/guardians to explore available support options, it may be determined that a student's needs can be best met in a congregated learning environment. In such cases, placement in a special education class or school must be considered. This information can be found on the TDSB Special Education Public website.

This year, 35 students are preparing for a return to their home school after participating in an annual IPRC review process. The purpose of inclusion is not to cut supports for students. The process involved the parents, teachers, principals/vice principals and special education staff. After careful review and consent from their parents, it was decided that these students were ready to experience a neighborhood school placement for the 2015/16 school year. Transition plans are being developed to support the students and teachers as these students prepare to attend their neighborhood school.