



**TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
5050 Yonge Street,  
Toronto, Ontario M2N 5N8  
Tel: (416) 397-3288 • Fax: ((416) 393-9969  
www.tdsb.on.ca

## Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

MEETING NOTICE – December 14, 2015 at 7:00 pm – Board Room

<b>To: Groups Represented on SEAC:</b>	<b>Representatives and (Alternates):</b>		
Association for Bright Children	Diana Avon	(Catherine Drillis)	
Autism Society of Ontario – Toronto	Lisa Kness	(Ginny Pearce)	
Brain Injury Society of Toronto	Cynthia Sprigings		
Community Living Toronto	Clovis Grant	(Margarita Isakov)	
Down Syndrome Association of Toronto	Richard Carter	(Elaine Dodsworth-Lever)	
Easter Seals Ontario	Deborah Fletcher	(Adebukola Adenowo-Akpan)	
Epilepsy Toronto	Steven Lynette	(Sheelagh Hysenaj)	
Learning Disabilities Association Toronto	Mark Kovats		
VIEWS for the Visually Impaired	David Lepofsky		
VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children	Paul Cross		
TDSB North East Community	Aline Chan	Jean-Paul Ngana	
TDSB North West Community	Phillip Sargent	Jordan Glass	
TDSB South East Community	Olga Ingrahm	Diane Montgomery	(Dick Winters)
TDSB South West Community	Nora Green	Paula Boutis	(Ken Stein)
TDSB Trustees	Pamela Gough	Alexander Brown	Howard Kaplan

**Regrets:** Olga Ingrahm, Mark Kovats, David Lepofsky, Phillip Sargent, Jean Paul Ngana, Trustee Brown, Trustee Kaplan

**Staff Present:** Uton Robinson, Ian Allison, Margo Ratsep

**Recorder:** Margo Ratsep

## Minutes

### 1. Call to Order/Quorum

Chair Steven Lynette welcomed new SEAC Trustee representative, Pamela Gough.

### 2. Approval of the Agenda

Paul Cross moved that the Agenda be approved. The motion carried.

### 3. Declaration of Possible Conflicts of Interest

None noted.

### 4. Confirmation of Minutes for meeting of November 2, 2015

Clovis Grant moved that the Minutes of November 2, 2015 be approved. The motion carried.

### 5. Presentations/Delegations/Consultations

#### 5.1 Member Presentation: Epilepsy Toronto

Steven Lynette gave an oral presentation about Epilepsy, including the following facts:

- Epilepsy is a neurological disorder resulting in uncontrolled movements affecting 1 in 100 of the population.
- Seizures affect individuals in different ways.
- Stigma is attached to seizures, affecting life opportunities, making it difficult for people to find work, remain employed, do sports, obtain insurance coverage, etc. This creates stress, which in turn can trigger seizures.
- Seizures can interrupt thought processes and even cause brain trauma, affecting ability to think, remember and learn.

## Meeting Agenda Continued

- Triggers include noise, flickering lights, eating too much, too little, exercising too much, not enough sleep, etc.
- There are multiple seizure types – spanning a continuum from small to big, complex partial to full, generalized seizures.
- Seizures are not always evident but can affect speech, vision, muscle control.
- If someone has a seizure: Stay calm; Protect the person by removing sharp objects and placing something soft under the head; Don't restrain the person; Never put anything in the person's mouth, Be reassuring after the seizure
- Epilepsy is described as a "disorder of anticipation" since the stress is waiting for the next one.
- Challenges are not easily recognized and accommodations are not easily obtained.

Steven closed by reading an excerpt from the Globe and Mail (2008) "Stalked by Seizures", describing the experience and perspective of a person whose daughter has epilepsy. He then made the following recommendations for helping students with epilepsy:

- Recognize that what happens outside the school affects inside the school. When a student has seizures at night, there may be cognitive issues the next day at school.
- Encourage parents to come in and talk to school staff about the student needs, or to arrange for someone to come into the school and speak to the staff – so that observers can recognize seizures, know what to do and not be put off by it.
- Parents should be invited to bring an advocate for IEP development and IPRC if they need help explaining needs
- Provide the supports (i.e. provide a pillow and blanket in each room student will be in for emergency response.)
- Ensure teachers who work with the student are aware of the signs, symptoms and needs of the student
- Include as a component in the Transition Plan in the IEP for informing staff from year to year.
- Schools need to reach out to parents to learn what can be done to help.
- General training in first aid for seizures would benefit all staff, providing the kind of knowledge about Epilepsy that can be used out in the community, whether or not there is a student with epilepsy in a specific school

In response to a question about staff and seizures, Ian Allison explained that TDSB addresses staff needs similarly to students, such as with safety plans and workplace accommodations.

### **5.2 Priority 1 – Presentation on processes for deciding educational services and supports**

Uton Robinson drew attention to the release of a brand new document this week in follow-up to the Sense of Belonging research, and will send it out electronically for review and discussion in January.

He gave an oral presentation about TDSB processes for staff allocation, In-School Team (IST) and School Support Team (SST) and the Parent Concern Protocol. (See Appendix A) During the presentation, he responded to questions and made additional points.

#### **Support Staff Allocation**

The staff allocation process started in November. Direct responsibility is to ensure staff is in place to address the needs of students with special education needs.

#### **IST/SST – Overview of Administrators Manual**

This manual is reviewed and updated annually by department staff. The manual supports a consistent process across the system, describing the expected standards for the team meeting processes.

- SST meetings are coordinated by the special education coordinator to ensure the appropriate staff is present in the room for the "case conference".
- There are challenges ensuring everything is completed on a timely basis.
- It is important that support staff is part of the meeting but that is a challenge, since there is a conflicting need for the support for the student to be continued during the meeting.
- Accommodations in the regular classroom are the first consideration. There can be support staff in regular programs based on need.
- The SNA, whether in an ISP or regular program, is allocated based on need.



**TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
5050 Yonge Street,  
Toronto, Ontario M2N 5N8  
Tel: (416) 397-3288 • Fax: ((416) 393-9969  
www.tdsb.on.ca

- When principals comment regarding lack of funding, the message is misleading. We identify the needs and then do what we need to do to support the student.
- The consultants and coordinators report on the needs they have learned about in the schools. There is a quick turnaround to address the needs through supports – 90% of the time based on safety reasons. Generally, the need for continued support changes over time.

**SEAC members provided the following recommendations:**

- Schools need to focus on identifying what the support needs are, before stating that the school doesn't have the budget for the support a child needs.
- For greater transparency, clearly outline where staff allocation changes are being made (i.e. EA cuts) and where it impacts or does not impact on the students.
- There is a need to clarify with parents that the nature of the EA role is to support the class, and it is the teacher who teaches the child.
- If we are meeting student needs, certain things should not be happening. For example, there should be no "refusal to admit" letters, or students on modified days.
- TDSB should collect exit data to identify why students leave the system.
- The high suspension rate for kindergarten children means TDSB needs to revisit the lay-off of kindergarten EAs last year.
- The role of the EA and the teacher seems to change depending on how the teacher chooses to use the EA/SNA – EAs and SNAs need to know how to advocate for the children they support.

Uton spoke to some of the points made:

- We are unlikely ever to reach the "at no time" for refusals to admit or modified days. We try to identify what needs to be in place to ensure that students receive their 300 minutes. This is reported through the FOS superintendents. The goal is not to permit modified attendance to be a permanent situation, although it can happen for medical needs for a period of time.
- Suspension rates for special education students are troubling and this is a concern, requiring a closer look at what other steps we can put in place to reduce the number of students being suspended. For safety reasons suspension is used as a last resort.
- Meetings this year have been a challenge (resulting from job actions), with limited face-to-face time in the system to review processes with staff.

**Parent Concern Protocol**

Referring to distributed copies, Uton Robinson explained that the document was adopted in 2003 just after amalgamation and revised in 2008. It outlines the process parents would use to have their concerns addressed. Uton responded to questions:

- While there isn't any mention in the protocol of involving third parties to better articulate what a child needs (i.e. Psychologist), it is implicit from the perspective that parents can at any time bring an ally/advocate or someone who can better explain the situation as part of the process at any stage of the discussion.
- The sequence of steps is listed in the protocol for parents to follow, starting with the classroom teacher on to the principal and to the school superintendent.
- Consultation may take place with consultants or coordinators through the process of dealing with the concern.
- Mandate is to develop a welcoming environment. There are situations where principals need to get clarification from time to time, such as if the advocate is a lawyer.

**Input from SEAC**

- Time is lost sometimes before any agreement or intervention can be done. Parents may not be aware of steps they can take.
- There is a need for more specific guidelines to outline steps parents can take and reasonable timelines for taking those steps.
- There is a need to work advocacy into the documents so principals do not state it is not part of the process.

## 6. SEAC Business and Open Discussion

### PIAC-SEAC Parent Conference Planning Committee

Clovis Grant, co-chair of the PIAC SEAC Parent Conference Planning Committee brought forward a request, requiring a decision by SEAC. The Planning Committee has been asked to consider merging the conference with one being jointly hosted by Model Schools and Mental Health and Well Being. He introduced the PIAC Co-Chair Mirian Turcios and referred to the advantages and disadvantages of having a joint conference, provided in advance to SEAC members. Pros include reaching a broader/different audience and accessing more resources, including transportation for parents to the conference. One concern of the PIAC SEAC committee is that having a joint conference might mean limits to the special education workshops presented. Through a joint planning effort, SEAC could reach a larger and different audience than the 300 currently reached.

#### Discussion points raised:

- If able to pool the resources, should investigate videotaping sessions or providing materials from the sessions so other parents can access the resources.
- Merging the conference would be a better use of money – one stop shopping.
- Don't see a return in having a larger site if it costs more money unless you can create the interest.
- Costs are high because of child-minding costs.
- Bussing provided through Model Schools is a benefit.
- Still deciding on whether it will be held one or two days or one big conference (April 2 and or 16)

Vote by a show of hands resulted in consensus to merge.

## 7. Business Arising from the November Minutes

### Pupil Accommodation Focus Group (Nora Green)

At the meeting, the Ministry guidelines were reviewed, covering aspects of planning, consultation and how to submit reports. Proposed changes would impact on public consultation. The former minimum requirement was 4 public meetings over a 7 month period and new requirement is 2 meetings over 5 months. Participants at the committee were in favour of maintaining the 4 consultations over 7 month process.

#### Follow-up Action:

Nora will send the document to everyone.

## 8. Trustee Reports and Follow-up on Previous Action Items

Trustee Gough announced that the TDSB has a new interim director Dr. John Malloy, currently Assistant Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Education. He holds a PhD in Educational Administration from OISE and has been Director of Education of several other boards. He will be interim director for 18 months. He has received the Hall Panel report. The Minister will not be looking at putting in a supervisor in light of Dr. Malloy's appointment. There are some items the Ministry wants to discuss, but this will not begin until the new year. The 3 deputy directors are taking turns as acting Director until Dr. Malloy starts in January.

Trustee Gough also announced the January 12<sup>th</sup> Ward forum being held at Second Street Jr/MS, with a focus on Special Education.

## 9. Reports/Updates from Active SEAC Subcommittees

No reports were required.



**TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
5050 Yonge Street,  
Toronto, Ontario M2N 5N8  
Tel: (416) 397-3288 • Fax: ((416) 393-9969  
www.tdsb.on.ca

## **10. Special Education Department Updates**

Uton Robinson announced the retirement of Central Coordinating Superintendent Jeff Hainbuch, who will be following his passion for social justice by joining Free the Children in an executive capacity.

## **11. Correspondence Received by the Chair**

- 12.1 Copy of letter dated 6 November 2015 from Rob Kirwan, SEAC Chair for Ottawa Carleton DSB to Michael Barrett, President of Ontario Public School Boards Association re: support for Thames Valley DSB and Upper Grand DSB SEAC advocacy for children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD)
- 12.2 Email dated 25 November 2015 from Toronto Family Network re video "Dear Teacher: Heartfelt Advice for Teachers from Students"
- 12.3 Email dated 26 November 2015 from Michelle McDonald resigning as SEAC representative for Brain Injury Society of Toronto and naming BIST Alternate Cynthia Sprigings as acting replacement

## **12. Member Announcements (Upcoming Events/Items of Interest)**

Clovis will forward information regarding National Inclusive Education Month (February).

## **13. New Business &/or Business Arising from Correspondence**

None required

## **14. Agenda Setting for Future Meetings**

**January 11, 2016**

- SEAC Election of Chair/Vice Chair
- Setting the 2016 year calendar of SEAC meetings
- Priority 1 (continued)

### **Potential Presentation/Consultation Topics:**

- TDSB Assistive Technology Strategy
- Sense of Belonging Research
- Refusal to Admit, Suspensions and Expulsions
- TDSB Mental Health Strategy
- Executive Summary – Results from the Ministry's PPM 140 Survey (Jan Fukumoto, Central Coordinator for ASD Programs)
- Census Data

## **15. Adjournment**

Aline Chan moved adjournment. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

## Meeting Agenda Continued



## Appendix A

### TDSB Staff Allocation in Special Education – General Information

- Overall enrolment drives funding grants, including grants for special education
- The Ministry of Education funding formula and compliance measures (i.e. PTR, class size standards, preparation time) impact on how staffing is allocated.
- Employee labour costs represent approximately 91.4% of the budget
- Special Education programs are put in place based on identified needs, which are determined from IPRC decisions and from SST recommendations reflected in IEPs.
- Allocations are determined through consultation with FOS superintendents and central special education staff.
- Intensive Support Program (ISP) teachers are allocated based on IPRC placement decisions
- ISP support staff are allocated in concert with teacher allocation and are related to the nature of student and program needs
- Community Based Resource Model (CBRM) and secondary resource teachers are allocated by formula. The formula takes into account such factors as enrolment, program needs, Learning Opportunities Index (LOI) ranking and for secondary – student achievement. Through consultation with Family of Schools Superintendents and regional special education staff, minor allocation adjustments are made to address the unique and sometimes transitory needs of some schools, which are not sufficiently captured by the formula.
- CBRM support staff are allocated based on enrolment and program needs
- Timing of staff allocation is tied to timelines in collective agreements, so board approvals must be sought in early March and allocation of school-based teachers completed in late March.
- Decisions about staffing are based on projections. Some staff allocation is “held back” to address needs as they arise in the new school year.
- System considerations/impacts on allocation include such things as school closures, changes in school configuration, anticipated student flow through, requirements for provision of preparation time provision, etc.

### Behind the process are what we consider Drivers Guiding Staff Allocation Decision-Making

**Equity** – Provide access to programs and services as much as possible in neighbourhood home schools, with ISP placement as close to home as possible

**Inclusion** – Maintain emphasis on support in neighbourhood schools and provide needs-based distribution of allocations to support students in their home schools

**Minimizing transitions** – Minimize the numbers of students who would have to transition to another school due to the move or closure of a program

**Clustering of special education programs** – Provide opportunities for mutual professional support and enhanced innovation in programming (also aids in minimizing transitions by meeting flow-through needs)

**Needs-based decision-making** – Objective decision-making using comparative data generated by criteria referenced formulae, but permitting some adjustments to address special education considerations that the formulae may not capture

**Decentralized decision-making** – Making allowances for local flexibility, through collaborative decision-making with Family of Schools (FOS) Superintendents around needs-based allocations

**Finding efficiencies** – Maximize resources and build consistency across the system, harmonizing legacy practices

**Accommodation** – Respond to system needs but ensure adequate available alternatives nearby when required to move a special education class or program out of a school

## Meeting Agenda Continued

**Facility/Program Alignment** – Addressing the need to align existing and new facilities to specific ISP requirements, including physical accessibility

### **Special Education Staff Allocation Process Steps**

The process of planning Staff Allocation for the next school year takes place throughout the preceding school year, commencing in the fall and meeting board budget and collective agreement timelines as the year progresses. The Staff Allocation Process involves the participation of the Special Education Department East and West regional teams, of Supervising Principals, Vice Principals, Coordinators and Consultants. The Family of Schools (FOS) Superintendents are also consulted about the needs of schools under their supervision. The following steps are taken, with allocation finalized according to collective agreement requirements:

1. Review current delivery model and allocations by exceptionality
2. Analyse enrolment trends over the last 5 years and determine possible growth/closures
3. Review previous “Drivers” and make adjustments in accordance with the Board Improvement Plan
4. Establish potential staff allocation targets and criteria, for efficient resource utilization while addressing ISP needs and for consistency across the system
5. Identify level of student need for ISPs by exceptionality across the system and develop model for staff allocation
6. Identify projected facility space accommodation issues as they arise
7. Establish and confirm ISP numbers, site requirements and allocate to sites
8. Carry out a gap analysis of ISP offerings across the system
9. Address gaps and individual school issues as they arise
10. Establish hold-back parameters, especially in the case of special needs assistants, the most dynamic aspect of support staff placement - sometimes placed for the year, sometimes placed for portions of the year, based on moves and changes that happen during the course of the school year.
11. Finalize allocation of teachers and support staff

### **Categories of Special Education Support Staff**

Under collective agreement provisions, support staff positions have job descriptions and related qualification requirements. Each category has restrictions about the specific kinds of support the staff can provide to students. Depending on their qualification categories, support staff allocation helps to meet a variety of student emotional, behavioural, physical, personal care, medical and academic needs, under the supervision of a special education teacher.

- **Educational Assistant Level I (EAI)** for Mild to Moderate needs – Assigned to schools as part of the Community Based Resource Model (CBRM) to provide individual or small group instructional/programming support under the supervision of the Home School Program (HSP) teacher.
- **Educational Assistant Level J (EAJ)** for Moderate to Severe needs – Assigned to Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) to provide instructional/programming support under the supervision of the teacher, as well as support for some of the more complex needs of students in the ISP, including their emotional, behavioural, and physical mobility needs
- **Educational Assistant Level K (EAK)** – Assigned to provide instructional/programming support and to assist with meeting the physical, personal care and medical needs of students in the Intensive Support Programs of the most vulnerable students (such as those with Developmental Disability).
- **Child and Youth Worker (CYW)** – Assigned to assist teachers in a variety of ISP settings, with effective classroom programming and behaviour management techniques to prevent and remediate learning and behaviour problems and to develop social/emotional and life skills.
- **Child and Youth Worker Special Incidence Portion (CYW – SIPs)** – Partially funded by the Ministry of Education to assist specific, very high needs, at risk students who meet Ministry SIP





funding requirements. Where the Ministry funding falls short of needs, TDSB funds additional allocations on a temporary basis, referred to as (TDSB) CYW – SIP.

- **Safety Travel Assistance** – Assigned, usually on a temporary basis to meet the transportation-related needs of very high risk students in special education programs, whose ability to travel safely cannot be met any other way.

## Special Needs Assistant (SNA) Allocation

Special Needs Assistant (SNA) are allocated to schools for principal assignment within the school, to assist regular or special education classroom teachers of students with “high risk” safety or medical needs, which present a constant, immediate and extreme risk for the students and others in the school. While SNAs are not allocated for academic support, they can provide academic assistance to the students with whom they work. The vast majority of school allocations are shared among a number of classrooms and students.

The on-going need for SNA support is not meant to be permanent, lasting throughout the school career of a student. The provision of SNA support is meant to provide an initial safety net for high risk students, with the goal to put in place the appropriate kinds of program support that will aid them to become more independent in meeting their own safety and medical needs.

SNAs are a finite resource. SNA allocations are reviewed annually by the regional special education teams, whose members have both the Family of Schools (FOS) and system perspective and are able to compare school needs within the FOS and across the region, to ensure appropriate, needs-based allocations. Decisions are made to renew or reassign reallocations to address the changing needs of schools. This process also includes a small “hold back” of allocation so that newly identified needs can be addressed as they occur in schools in the fall.

Within the current TDSB Special Education Budget for 2015-2016, total budgeted SNA allocation is 530. System allocation in the spring totalled 490 with 40 hold back. A total of 503 SNAs are currently allocated in schools for the year, with regional allocations as follows:

- East Region – 246 to start and 20 hold back. To date there are 240.5 permanent allocations
- West Region – 244 to start and 20 hold back. Currently there are 262.5 permanent allocations

Until the remaining holdback (currently 27 SNA full time allocation) is more permanently assigned, the unused allocation is deployed in short term, temporary (TEMP) placements that arise through the year, to support schools in meeting the needs of students until more appropriate kinds of program support is put in place. This kind of allocation is also used at times to support ISP classes on an “as needs” basis.

In terms of TEMP allocations, we have used:

- 35 full time equivalent (FTE) SNAs
- 12 TDSB CYW SIPs
- 2 Safety Travel Assistants.

Some of these have ended and others will end on December 18 and be reassigned.

## Standards and Targets

The allocation of support staff to different exceptionality Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) is guided by the Standards and Targets reviewed annually, to address the nature of student needs within the program and ensure cross-system consistency. A Standard is a description of what staff allocation looks like for the specific special education programs. A Target is a description of what changes may be needed in the make-up of support allocations.

Since Ministry funding is not needs-based and TDSB special education needs outstrip funding, support staff resources available for allocation are finite. All staff allocation must be guided by efficient resource utilization and requires a balancing act to remain as much as possible within the funding allocation. Every attempt is made to do so during the allocation process. For example, if the standard support staff allocation for a specific exceptionality ISP program is an EAJ and there is a desire to establish a new

## Meeting Agenda Continued

target to increase support in that kind of ISP, additional allocation might be managed through a decrease in the needs of other ISPs (i.e. brought about by such things as declines in specific special education populations, reduced ISP flow through, reduced school needs for CBRM allocations, etc.). The staff saved through these kinds of efficiencies can be reallocated to address other needs.

Where there are few opportunities for efficiencies and support staff allocation must be improved (i.e. to ensure system-wide consistency or to address an unanticipated increase in high needs, at risk students), then TDSB has little choice but to spend beyond the special education budget to address the needs. This is what places TDSB special education in a budget deficit situation.

## Current Standards for Special Education Program Support Staff Allocation

The current standard under review is as follows, depending on the profile of students in the program – where increases can occur when the nature of student exceptionality-based needs calls for it:

DK	1 EA J and 1 noon hour assistant
Primary ISP	1 EA I
Communication	0.5 EA I
Autism	1 CYW
MID Elementary	1 EA I
Developmental Disability	1 – 2 EA K (dependent on setting) and 1 noon hour assistant
Physical	1.5 to 2 EA J (dependent on setting and level of needs)
Gifted (P)	1 EA J
Gifted (J, I, S)	none as a standard – but programs have a hard cap
Behaviour	1 CYW
KIP	1 CYW and 1 lunchroom assistant
B/LV	2 Braille Program EA J
D/HH	1 EA J, Oral or Sign; 1 sign language facilitator (program dependent)
Deaf/Blind	All Deafblind students have a Deafblind intervenor