



Toronto District School Board
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee Name: Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
Date: Monday, December 8, 2014
Time: 7:00 pm
Present: Diana Avon, Michelle Brick, Trustee Alexander Brown, Richard Carter, Aline Chan, Deborah Fletcher, Clovis Grant, Nora Green, Debra Hayden, Olga Ingrahm, Trustee Howard Kaplan, Steven Lynette, Jean-Paul Ngana, Ginny Pearce, Cynthia Sprigings
Regrets: Christina Buczek, Paul Cross, Philip Sargent, Trustee Tiffany Ford
Staff: Uton Robinson, Anne Seymour, Jeff Hainbuch, Margo Ratsep
Recorder: Linda Mendonca & Margo Ratsep

ITEM	DISCUSSION	RECOMMENDATION/ MOTION
1. Call to Order/Quorum	A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was convened at 7:03 pm on Monday, December 8, 2014 in the Board Room, 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario with Michelle Brick presiding as Chair. Quorum was achieved at 7:05 pm.	
2. Approval of Agenda	Motion: Steven Lynette moved that the agenda be approved as amended. All in favour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Addition under New Business – Concussion Policy (to hear PIAC Rep Sharon Kerr) 	Motion carried.
3. Declaration of Possible Conflicts of Interest	None noted.	
4. Confirmation of Minutes	Motion: Clovis Grant moved that the minutes from November 4, 2014 be approved as amended. All in favour. Jean-Paul Ngana – in Item 7 (2) change “PIAC initiative” to “PIAC/SEAC initiative”	Motion carried.
5. Delegations/Presentations	No presentations were received.	
6. Open Discussion and Consultation	Open Discussion & Consultation 1. January Meeting – Attendance & Quorum (Michelle Brick) The next meeting is proposed for January 12 th . Members were asked to indicate ability to attend to ensure quorum. ***Action: Margo to confirm meeting date against adopted board calendar.	

<p>6. Open Discussion and Consultation (continued)</p>	<p>2. SEAC Representation on School Climate Survey Working Group (Michelle Brick)</p> <p>SEAC is invited to send a representative to participate in a Focus Group for the School Climate Survey</p> <p>***Action: Jean-Paul Ngana to represent SEAC in the Focus Group</p> <p>3. Communication Tracker – Collation of Collected Input (Michelle Brick)</p> <p>Nora is collecting tracker information from members and has not received anything back yet. The Learning Disability Association of Ontario’s information is ready and Michelle will be forwarding it. Other members are asked to forward their input for compilation. Jean-Paul Ngana noted the need for more effective information sharing through the joint SEAC/PIAC Working Group and suggested the Parent Conference could be used for information collection and connecting with parents.</p> <p>***Action: Members to follow up with associations. Nora and Margo to collate the information.</p> <p>4. PIAC/SEAC Parent Conference Update (Margo Ratsep)</p> <p>At the last PIAC/SEAC Conference Planning Committee in November, the majority of committee members asked to move the conference from its January date to March 28th pending site availability, in order to provide more planning time. The date will be confirmed at the PIAC/SEAC Conference planning meeting on December 9th. The conference theme will be the same as last year and will offer 2 workshops, a marketplace session, and breakout sessions for networking. SEAC associations are invited to participate in the marketplace from 10 am – 2 pm and where possible offer workshops on requested topics. Community reps are also needed as hosts and facilitators. Michelle Brick encouraged member associations to increase their visibility by presenting workshops in addition to hosting Marketplace displays.</p> <p>SEAC members suggested additional topics for workshops and marketplace topics: Youth Employment Partnerships (YEP), Bullying, and Gifted Program (Intellectual). Nora Green noted that planning post-secondary transitions varies with populations (i.e. DD Population vs LD) so both should be addressed. York University does presentations on LD in particular. The DSO process could be a whole workshop in itself.</p> <p>***Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Margo Ratsep to email members regarding a confirmed date for the conference 2. Members to confirm with Margo regarding their participation 3. Aline Chan to forward to Margo information regarding Youth Employment Partnership & Centennial Program. 4. Margo Ratsep to take SEAC suggestions to PIAC/SEAC Conference Planning Committee for consideration 	
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<p>7. Business Arising from the Minutes</p>	<p>SEAC Inclusion Strategy Chart – Review of SEAC Input (Anne Seymour)</p> <p>Anne Seymour expressed appreciation for SEAC’s input, which is being consolidated with input received from other constituents. Based on SEAC suggestions, she solicited data from the Research Department. More research is needed in some areas, such as Employee Services data, and performance/achievement data for alternative curriculum. Research on ‘Sense of Belonging’ was very recently made available. This included analysis of perceptual data from questions that probe how students feel about themselves – in their schools, re comfort and care, and what motivates students to be successful. Jeff Hainbuch has also begun an inventory on use of technology.</p> <p>During discussion, SEAC members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended that the Inclusion Strategy Chart include “Outcomes” in addition to “Impacts” in the Impact line • Requested a staff presentation on the “Sense of Belonging” research and related impacts on student success • Recommended that the sense of belonging and related success in school should be included in the analysis of Impacts in the Inclusion Strategy • Requested information on how student needs by exceptionality are tracked • Requested details about the process being used for reducing the number of ISP classes and about decision-making around which exceptionality classes are being closed • Recommended TDSB capture numbers of families who leave and identify why families leave and why they stay, since ‘belonging’ extends beyond the individual student to the family • Recommended greater clarity around specific objectives of the inclusion strategy <p>*** Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anne Seymour to amalgamate all input, complete a gap analysis and inform SEAC 2. Uton Robinson to investigate Gillian Parekh’s availability to present on the Sense of Belonging research. 3. Uton Robinson to provide details on the process for reducing ISP classes, and on how student needs by exceptionality are tracked. 	
<p>8. Trustee Reports and Follow-Up on Previous Action Items</p>	<p>Michelle introduced and welcomed new SEAC member Trustee Alexander Brown. Trustee Ford sent regrets and was unable to attend due to a prior engagement.</p>	
<p>9. Reports/Updates from Active SEAC Subcommittees</p>	<p>None noted.</p>	

<p>10. Special Education Department Updates</p>	<p>Special Education Department Updates</p> <p>Superintendent Anne Seymour's update on Inclusion was covered under Item 7 Executive Superintendent Uton Robinson provided an update. (see Page 6 to 8)</p> <p>Following Superintendent Robinson's update, SEAC members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sought clarification regarding which categories of students were included in the 48% referred to in the Sense of Belonging data • Supported the investigation of technology use beyond HSP and ISP, to look at overall purchases of technology across the system in different categories – i.e. by school, by Special Education, parents groups, school councils, etc. to assess equitable access and to use in professional learning for students, and staff • Recommended a focus on Reading, the common denominator for achievement. If we can improve in that one area, they will all benefit • Suggested that there needs to be parent education about inclusion as well – providing a clear rationale and system expectations • Recommended that issues related to safety be carefully considered and planned for, since some of the students will need a safe place to go so they are not sent home when having difficulties with self-control • Requested more detailed information about the roles and responsibilities of the different categories of Special Education support staff (EAI, EAJ, SNA, CYW) <p>***Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Margo to arrange a staff presentation on Support Staff for a future meeting 2. Gillian Parekh to provide clarification about Sense of Belonging data during her presentation 	
<p>11. Correspondence Received by the Chair</p>	<p>The SEAC Chair received the following correspondence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Letter dated November 10, 2014 from Katie Muirhead and Alison Morse, Co-Chairs, PAAC on SEAC re: results of 2014 SEAC Survey 2. Email dated November 24, 2014 from Michelle Munroe re: Invitation to CAC and CLG for representation in Focus Group for Gr 7-12 School Climate Surveys 	
<p>12. New Business</p>	<p>Concussion Policy</p> <p>Cynthia Sprigings introduced Sharon Kerr, PIAC Rep (W21), who is seeking SEAC support about a PIAC motion regarding the new TDSB Concussion Policy (PPM 158).</p> <p>As the parent of a child with an acquired brain injury, Sharon expressed concerns about the lack of a standardized process for assisting brain-injured students back to learning and for supporting their families. In response to Ministry PPM 158, the TDSB Teaching and Learning Department (under "Return to Play") recently developed a concussion policy.</p>	

	<p>Consultations with parents have been completed and procedures are being written. She believes there are weaknesses in the areas of IPRC access, support tools in the classroom, family support and board expertise in brain injury. A PIAC motion seeks more community consultation/parent involvement in developing the procedures and she requested SEAC's support. Questions about the special education status of students with concussion or acquired brain injury were answered. Depending on the nature of the brain injury, some associated learning impacts may satisfy Ministry criteria for identification under different exceptionalities. Required classroom supports are specific to injuries and some kinds of supports qualify as 'special education' support. Superintendent Jeff Hainbuch noted that the policy is posted on the TDSB public website.</p> <p>During discussion, SEAC members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioned why SEAC was not consulted in the development of this policy and its procedures, since students with concussion and other acquired brain injuries can experience life-long impacts and can require special education supports as the result of the injury • Requested a staff presentation on the policy at the January SEAC meeting for SEAC input • Identified the need for a delineated system process for engaging SEAC as part of the public consultation process, so that SEAC consultation is included in the required pathway for new policy development that relates in any way to special education <p>***Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Uton Robinson to request a presentation on the new policy from Teaching and Learning through Superintendent Beth Butcher, for the January meeting.</i> 2. <i>Clovis Grant to prepare a draft motion regarding the development of a system process for SEAC consultation</i> 	
<p>13. Agenda Setting for Future Meetings</p>	<p>Agenda Setting for Future Meetings</p> <p>Member Presentations</p> <p>January 12th – Brain Injury Society</p> <p>February (date TBA) – Down Syndrome Association</p> <p>Upcoming Consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Consultation • Technology Strategy • Inclusion Strategy 	
<p>14. Adjournment</p>	<p>***Motion: Ginny moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 pm. All in favour.</p>	<p>Motion carried.</p>

Department Update – December 8, 2015**Uton Robinson, TDSB Executive Superintendent Special Education and Section Programs**

Welcome to the new Special Education Advisory Committee Trustees.

The Special Education department would like to thank Trustee John Hastings and Trustee Sam Sotiropoulos for their valuable contributions in support of students with special needs. We are glad that Trustee Howard Kaplan will continue to serve on SEAC.

On behalf of the department, we welcome Trustee Tiffany Ford and Trustee Alexander Brown who will join Trustee Howard Kaplan on SEAC. Early in the New Year I would like the opportunity to share with you initiatives that the special education department are moving forward with, to better serve students with special needs.

Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement Meeting with Ministry of Education

On November 27, 2014, the Special Education Department and other academic TDSB departments had an opportunity to discuss trends, themes, actions and priorities that support greater student achievement and well-being. This Bi-Annual meeting provides TDSB and the Ministry with information that supports collective goals.

The Special Education department highlighted compelling data that is being used to better address the students with special needs. Concern was shared about the high number of students in special education programs (excluding Gifted) who are not experiencing a sense of belonging.

This information came from a study by one of our researchers, Gillian Parekh. We continue to take steps to ensure that students with special needs experience greater inclusion and a sense of belonging. This is in keeping with an emphasis on promoting a growth mindset, that creates a culture of learning which includes the belief that all students can learn. I will ask Gillian to share this data at an upcoming SEAC meeting.

Special Education Professional Learning Series

Special Education Administrators, Coordinators, and Consultants are engaged in a series of Professional Learning Sessions that focus on Cultural Relevant Responsive Pedagogy. This three afternoon series of workshops is being presented through the leadership of our Equity and Inclusive Schools Department. The intent is to give staff perspectives that will give them a greater understanding and appreciation for the rich contributions that all cultures bring to the learning environment.

Staffing Allocation Process

The annual Special Education Staffing process has begun. Cindy Burley is assisting the team with this process. The drivers on the next page are being used to guide the staff allocation process.

Drivers Guide the Special Education Staff Allocation Process

Equity—access to programs and services as much as possible in home schools and ISPs as close to home as possible.

Inclusion—staff allocation generated from our move to greater inclusion will be used to support students in their local school.

Tiered Approach—allocate staff to align with *Learning for All* philosophy of a tiered approach to intervention, i.e., differentiation among the supports.

Fiscal Requirements—build capacity, move toward consistency in practices and communication, and find savings to align with 2015-16 fiscal requirements.

Needs-Based Decision-Making—staff allocations generated by criteria-referenced formulae and in turn, adjusted minimally to reflect school-based considerations. As well, ISP program locations are chosen based on needs-based criteria, including geographical proximity to students' home addresses.

Facility/Program Alignment—the need to align both existing and new facilities to specific ISP program requirements, in order to maximize access to appropriate facilities that promote student success. As well, the need within each region to locate a minimum of one ISP for each exceptionality, at each panel, in an accessible school.

Minimizing Transitions

- a) Where possible, program location decisions have been made to minimize the number of students who would have to transition to another school due to the move or closure of a program.
- b) When a program is moved or closed and some students are affected by the change, schools should explore the option of supporting the students in their schools for the following year.
- c) When possible, the clustering of ISPs will ensure a flow through for students at the same school as they transition between divisions.
- d) Some additional transitions may be required due to the Primary inclusion initiative.

Decentralization—allowances have been made for local flexibility, collaborative decision-making with Family of Schools' (FOS) Superintendents of Education (SOEs) and needs-based allocations.

Clustering of ISPs for Students with Developmental Disabilities—where possible, programs for students with developmental disabilities will be in clusters of 3 ISPs or in pods of 6 ISPs.

Accommodation—special education ISP programs/classes are a key part of the school community and will not be moved out of a school to accommodate the expansion of other programs, such as full day kindergarten or French programs (extended or immersion). In rare cases where the movement of a program is necessary, the program will not be moved without adequate available alternative programs nearby.

Modelling for Greater Inclusion

The Vision of the Toronto District School Board's Special Education Plan is that students with exceptionalities be welcomed, included, and supported within well-resourced neighbourhood schools.

Inclusion is a way of thinking. Inclusive classrooms are places where all students "are integral members of classrooms, feel a connection to their peers, have access to rigorous and meaningful general education curricula and receive the collaborative support to succeed". (Causton-Theoharis & Theoharis, 2008, p. 26)

Inclusion has always been part of our Special Education Annual Plan. The TDSB through its Special Education Department, is committed to active and meaningful collaboration with students, parent/guardians, schools and agencies to ensure that learning needs of all students with special needs are met in the most equitable and inclusionary environments possible.

It is important to note that an inclusionary model does not ignore the fact that some students have complex needs that may require special consideration for more intensive support. Placements in special education classes or schools must be considered when it is determined that a student's needs can be best met in a congregated environment.

The move to greater inclusion is not being done to save money. The work on inclusive education is founded on the moral imperative to improve student achievement and well-being of all students. We continue to review our practices to ensure we are doing the best for all students. We are taking a measured approach to put supports in place that will address the needs of more students in their local school. We want all of our students to feel safe, respected and valued for their differences and similarities.

The plan at this time is to review the Intensive Support Placements for Primary students with Learning Disabilities, Mild Intellectual Disabilities and Behaviour. The goal is to place some of these students into their neighbourhood school for the next school year, when it is believed that that learning environment can meet the learning needs of those students. Upcoming IPRC review meetings will provide a forum to best determine how many of the approximately 420 students will return to their neighbourhood school.