



Toronto District School Board

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC) MINUTES

Date: Monday, October 6, 2014
Time: 7pm
Present: Diana Avon, Michelle Brick, Richard Carter, Aline Chan, Paul Cross, Mitchell Curci, Deborah Fletcher, Clovis Grant, Trustee John Hastings, Olga Ingrahm, Ginny Pearce, Phillip Sargent, Najia Shafi, Cynthia Springings
Regrets: Christina Buczek, Debra Hayden, Steven Lynette, Jean-Paul Ngana, Trustee Howard Kaplan, Trustee Sam Sotiropoulos
Staff: Uton Robinson, Anne Seymour, Margo Ratsep
Guests: Norah-Lynne McIntyre, Executive Director of VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children
 Sharon Petipas and Ellen Walsh, TDSB Special Education Consultants - Secondary
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 7:02 pm on Monday, October 06, 2014 in the Board Room, 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario with Michelle Brick presiding as Chair. Quorum was achieved at 7:04 pm.	
2. Approval of Agenda	Motion: Ginny Pearce moved that the agenda be approved as amended.	Motion carried.
3. Declaration of Possible Conflicts of Interest	None declared	
4. Confirmation of Minutes	Motion: Richard Carter moved that the minutes from September 15, 2014 be approved.	Motion carried.
5. Delegations/Presentations	<p>1. Member Presentation: VOICE – Norah-Lynn McIntyre, Executive Director</p> <p>Ms. McIntyre presented on the work of the association, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children. Of particular note, a new Parent Guide to School Partnerships has been developed and is available on-line. She announced, as well that VOICE has been awarded a contract for developing an on-line training module for all classroom teachers. In the new year Speech and Hearing Month</p>	



will feature a “Dress Loud Day” on May 1st and the VOICE conference will take place May 2nd at University of Guelph. Contact Information for VOICE, as well as their Parent Guide to School Partnerships and additional resources and tips for teachers can be found at: <http://www.voicefordeafkids.com>

2. Staff Presentation: Secondary Accommodations for Executive Function and Transition Planning – TDSB Special Education Consultants for Secondary Schools – Sharon Petipas (Secondary Consultant, East Region) & Ellen Walsh (Secondary Consultant, East Region)

Sharon Petipas and Ellen Walsh presented information on their work with TDSB Secondary Schools, assisting teaching staff in planning accommodations and modifications for students with special education learning needs. The presentation and follow-up discussion covered current efforts to improve student support in secondary schools. In partnership with Teaching and Learning teams, they are identifying needs and assessing how school models of program support can be made more effective and efficient in meeting those needs. They are also working with teachers in a range of subject areas, to help with modifications that can be used while still maintaining the integrity of the course credit. A major focus is on the effective use of assistive technology to support students. Examples of accommodations for students with executive function learning needs were also highlighted. The presentation also reviewed the kinds and degrees of transition planning carried out in secondary schools.

SEAC identified the need for:

- ***More focus on self-advocacy skills in GLE – students need to know and understand their individual learning profiles and to be supported in learning how to self-advocate***
- ***A consistent process for improved and early communication with all subject teachers about the needs of students on IEP’s and the kinds of accommodations/modifications required, to ensure all teachers understand from the start what they have to do to support those students***
- ***Stronger system messaging to secondary schools around having processes in place for meeting the requirements of IEPs***
- ***Improved communication among all parties around the needs of***



	<p><i>exceptional students in Cooperative Education programs and in Special High Skills Major programs, so special education students can be more successful in those programs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Better parent communication to help parents/guardians understand how the management of program modifications in secondary differs from elementary settings and impact on secondary pathways</i> • <i>Better use of assistive technology, particularly with newcomers to Canada</i> • <i>Better communication about initiatives leading to apprenticeships</i> • <i>Increased collaboration with the school effectiveness initiative to identify and assess metrics around improvements in meeting special education needs</i> • <i>A systematic approach for students with weaknesses in executive function to learn the related skills, as well as a way of measuring and reporting on that learning</i> <p>SEAC requested that Sharon and Ellen be invited back to a future meeting for continued discussion about secondary supports for students with special education needs, including more information about program modifications.</p> <p>Action: Superintendent Seymour will take the comments and suggestions back to the Secondary Steering Committee and report back at the next meeting.</p>	
<p>6. Open Discussion and Consultation Michelle Brick</p>	<p>SEAC Action on Speech Language Services (Michelle Brick)</p> <p>Members reviewed and amended the draft letter to the Ministers of Education, Children and Youth Services and Health and Long Term Care, in which SEAC recommends changes to Speech Language Services to align them more efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>Motion: Ginny Pearce moved that SEAC send the letter as amended.</p>	<p>Motion carried.</p>
<p>7. Business Arising from the Minutes</p>	<p>In follow-up to the September meeting Item 6, Richard Carter asked after the status of an undertaking to invite Karen Meeson to a SEAC meeting to answer questions about bussing. Superintendent Robinson confirmed her attendance at the November meeting. Trustee Hastings reported that as part of the Bussing</p>	



	<p>Appeals Process for applicants denied bussing, parents must go to the Administrative Tribunal to make their cases.</p> <p>SEAC identified the need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better communication with parents about the bussing application and appeals process • A decision-making process that permits additional consideration of a student’s special education needs <p>Trustee Hastings suggested that this be covered as part of the November Bussing presentation.</p> <p>Action: Superintendent Robinson will follow up with Karen Meeson.</p>	
<p>8. Trustee Reports and Follow Up on Previous Action Items</p>	<p>Trustee Hastings highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Humber CI Graduation Trustee Hastings attended the West Humber CI graduation of 170 students. He found it gratifying to see how the students took to heart the graduation of one of their classmates with special needs. • Skilled Trades Forum to be held at Thistleton CI on October 21. The forum will feature skills and trades programs, and talk about some of the challenges of apprenticeship programming. All are welcome to attend. Members can contact Trustee Hastings for more information. 	
<p>9. Reports/Updates from Active SEAC Subcommittees</p>	<p>1. PIAC/SEAC Special Education Parent Conference</p> <p>Margo Ratsep gave a brief report on the status of this endeavour. With the successful application for a PRO Grant and some additional TDSB funding from the Director, there is sufficient funds for such a conference. Current hurdles include conference timing, content and workload issues. SEAC is undergoing membership renewal through to the end of December, so participation in conference planning before the new year is problematic. The work load involved in event- planning is substantial and requires several months. In discussion, SEAC members agreed SEAC would not be able to take this workload on. SEAC members are willing to assist PIAC in ways similar to the last conference (participation in Networking Café, a limited number of workshops, etc.)</p> <p>Action: Superintendent Robinson and Margo Ratsep will follow up with</p>	



	<p><i>the PCEO office to determine if a conference is possible.</i></p> <p>2. Updates to Ontario Disability Act (ODA) Richard Carter asked about the board’s activities around recent changes to the ODA and suggested the SEAC Accessibility Subcommittee review the board’s Accessibility Plan. Uton Robinson reported that the Accessibility Plan is posted on the TDSB website. <i>Action: Margo Ratsep will send members the webpage link to the Plan</i></p> <p>3. Sub-Committee Membership Richard Carter invited current members of the Accessibility Subcommittee to meet to review the Accessibility Plan. This committee has been inactive recently and membership has been depleted. <i>Action: Members interested in joining the Accessibility Subcommittee are asked to inform Margo Ratsep and Richard Carter. In January, Margo will circulate the list of all SEAC Subcommittees, inviting new membership.</i></p>	
<p>10. Special Education Department Updates Uton Robinson Anne Seymour Jeff Hainbuch</p>	<p>1. Department Updates Uton Robinson provided an update (See Appendix A – page 8) Richard Carter sought clarification about the tracking of SEA claims and SEA equipment so that students have their equipment available when they move schools, and have it up-dated when warranted. Superintendent Seymour informed SEAC that the department is currently digitalizing all SEA claim files and is developing a strategy for more efficient database management to track and upgrade equipment. <i>Motion: Clovis moved to extend the meeting to 9:15pm. All approved.</i></p> <p>Inclusion Strategy Superintendent Anne Seymour provided an update on the Inclusion Strategy. She spoke to a template being used as a framework to gather input from stakeholders to develop the strategy. SEAC members were invited to contribute and a 6:00 pm pre-meeting on November 6th is planned for their input. <i>Action: Margo Ratsep will email a copy of the template to members ahead</i></p>	<p>Motion carried.</p>



	<p><i>of time. Members are to RSVP attendance at the meeting.</i></p> <p>SEAC Membership Renewal</p> <p>Margo Ratsep provided a brief description of the SEAC Membership Renewal process, which has also been posted on the SEAC pages of the TDSB Website. Information has been disseminated through the system weekly newsletter and will be highlighted on the TDSB main page in an announcement banner. All principals have been asked to post the process in their schools and to bring it to the attention of their school councils. Current members are invited to reapply. Association members are required to submit letters from their organizations, and nomination forms. Community members can self-nominate. The Board will not be organized until December, so January is likely to be the first meeting of the new SEAC term (following board appointment).</p> <p>Action: All current Association and Community members received electronic and hard copies of the forms required for membership reapplication. More detailed information is available at:</p> <p>http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/HowtoGetInvolved/CommunityAdvisoryCommittees/SpecialEducationAdvisoryCommittee/Membership.aspx</p>	
<p>11. Correspondence Received by the Chair</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Email dated September 18, 2014 from Lillian Wagman re Any answer yet? <i>Michelle Brick confirmed that SEAC did respond to this e-mail. Members all received a copy of the correspondence.</i> 2. Copy of letter dated June 24, 2014 to Minister of Education Liz Sandals from Peggy O'Toole, SEAC Chair, Peterborough, Northumberland and Clarington Catholic DSB re mandatory completion of Special Education Part 1 for all new teachers 3. Letter dated September 30, 2014 from Matthew Wark, President, Autism Ontario re: SEAC Representative Change 	
<p>12. New Business</p>	<p>Q & A Sections of Presentations</p> <p>Richard Carter asked if the minutes could include details of the Q&A that follows presentations, as well as the contact information for staff and external agencies. Margo Ratsep indicated that previous directives have been for minutes to</p>	



Appendix A

Executive Superintendent Uton Robinson gave an update on the following:

Department Plan

The update included an overview of EQAO goals, actions and measures of success, a focus on maintaining/reducing exemption rates and the use of professional learning communities. Other goals include:

- Improve structures to increase parent/student engagement in decision-making
- Make website more user friendly
- Increase in partnership support
- Move to greater inclusion – members were invited to bring input to November pre-meeting consultation

Technology Strategy

Superintendent Hainbuch has responsibility for the Department's technology strategy. The goal is for a 10% increase in use of assistive technology in special education programs. Discussion covered how a baseline is to be established and how progress is to be measured. These included measures of increased work completion, improved quality of work, increased use of assistive technology in classroom instruction, and measures of greater engagement and achievement. Superintendent Hainbuch will present on this topic in early 2015.

Implementation of PPM 156

As part of auditing practices to ensure alignment of practice in all departments, attendance by staff at training sessions is tracked. The message is consistent that everyone has ownership of students with Special Education needs.