



COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee Name: Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Date: Monday, April 13, 2015

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Present: Adebukola Adenowo-Akpan, Diana Avon, Paula Boutis, Trustee Alexander Brown, Richard Carter, Aline Chan, Paul Cross, Catherine Drillis, Deborah Fletcher, Trustee Tiffany Ford, Jordan Glass, Clovis Grant, Nora Green, Olga Ingrahm, Trustee Howard Kaplan, Mark Kovats, David Lepofsky, Steven Lynette, Michelle McDonald, Jean-Paul Ngana, Ken Stein

Regrets: Lisa Kness, Phillip Sargent, Cynthia Sprigings,

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

Guests:

Recorder: John Manalo and Margo Ratsep

| ITEM | DISCUSSION | RECOMMENDATION/ MOTION |
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| 1. Call to Order/Quorum | A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was convened at 7:05 pm on Monday, April 13, 2015 in the Board Room, 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario with Steven Lynette presiding as Chair. The Chair declared quorum was achieved. | |
| 2. Approval of Agenda | Motion: Richard Carter moved that the agenda be approved as amended. All in favour. Amendments included adding the following items under New Business: 1. Requested deputation 2. Requested change to September meeting date 3. Suggested speaker and presentation at June meeting | Motion carried. |
| 3. Declaration of Possible Conflicts of Interest | No declarations were made. | |
| 4. Confirmation of Minutes | Motion: Richard Carter moved that the Minutes from March 2, 2015 be approved. All in Favour. | Motion carried. |
| 5. Presentations/Delegations/Consultations | Craig Snider is rescheduled for the next SEAC meeting. | |

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| <p>6. SEAC Business & Open Discussion</p> | <p>SEAC Business & Open Discussion</p> <p>1. Special Education Funding Advocacy Strategy Members had already received an electronic copy of the Chair's letter to the Minister of Education. During discussion about next steps, a question was raised about a perceived \$22 million discrepancy between funding information provided by Craig Snider in his last presentation and funding amounts reported for last year by PAAC on SEAC.</p> <p>**Staff Undertaking: Craig Snider to be asked to provide an explanation about the perceived discrepancy as part of his presentation at the May meeting. The following requests for information were also made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did TDSB receive for special education in 2014-2015? How much of a reduction was this from the previous year? • How much more did TDSB spend on special education in 2014-2015 than was funded? • How exactly was it spent? • What is TDSB projected to receive for special education in 2015-2016? • What is TDSB projecting to spend on special education in 2015-2016? • How do the expenditures for both years break down? • What is the breakdown of expenditures, categorized by exceptionality? • What are the real numbers of the populations being served, and in what settings? • Has there been a reduction or increase in needs? <p>SEAC members were asked to send any other specific questions to Steven Lynette and Margo Ratsep.</p> <p>2. SEAC Code of Conduct Members were reminded that TDSB requires all Community Advisory Committees to have a Code of Conduct. Members reviewed TDSB PR585 to consider its adoption as SEAC's Code of Conduct. The consensus was that as worded, PR585 was not suited to SEAC's purposes. During discussion, reference was made to PPM 128/2012 which sets out standards for Codes of Conduct. Steven Lynette, Paula Boutis, Paul Cross, and Diana Avon volunteered to investigate options specific to SEAC's needs. Paula volunteered to draft a Code of Conduct for SEAC consideration at the May meeting.</p> <p>3. Ontario Regulation 274/12 and TDSB Teacher Hiring Practices SEAC has recently received copies of letters from several SEACs from across the province, expressing concerns about Ontario Reg 274/12 which prioritizes seniority as a key determinant for hiring occasional teachers. A concern was expressed that favouritism for more senior teachers could disadvantage newer teachers who are equally or better qualified. Superintendent Allison explained how Regulation 274/12 is put into practice. Seniority does not dictate who gets</p> | |
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hired. The hiring process also includes qualifications, resume content, reference checks and scored interviews. The process may take more time, but principals are still able to hire the best applicant for the position.

4. Suggestions for the SEAC meeting standing item: Trustee Reports

A question was raised at the March meeting regarding what SEAC members wished to hear as part of the regular Trustee Reports. Discussion covered the need for SEAC to be given the opportunity to provide input prior to board decision-making. SEAC's ability to fulfil its mandate requires that board staff who work on TDSB policies and procedures that impact on student inclusion, involve SEAC at an early stage.

Members made the following suggestions for Trustee Reports:

1. Provide background on budget discussion and the challenges being faced
2. Report on any system issue that has an impact on schools and students, since this would include special education students. Examples given included the requirement for police record checks for parent volunteers on field trips; property sales since Area Reviews impact on program location; suspension policy since higher suspension rates have been linked with special education in the past, etc.
3. Update SEAC on what is upcoming to the board, for example, review the top 3 issues coming to the board.
4. As SEAC's voice at the board table, speak in support of SEAC motions that go forward to the board and report back on the status of the decisions made.
5. Provide information that enables SEAC to be part of the process, not an afterthought – to be able to look at the issues facing the board and provide input on ways to support greater inclusion. For example, when the board is looking at closing schools, is it closing schools with elevators, making the board less inclusive?

SEAC members expressed the desire to be part of the process, rather than an afterthought, and recommended the following:

- That staff brief SEAC about the steps the board takes to remove/prevent barriers to inclusion – so SEAC can help to identify what might be missed in decision-making. For example, what steps does the board take to ensure the curriculum is fully accessible...that the gym equipment/software/computers purchased can be used by all special needs kids
- That SEAC establish a set of priorities that can assist the board in moving forward with its commitment to inclusion
- That senior staff flag decisions that could impact on inclusion and accessibility.

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| | <p>5. Heydon Park Event – May 2015 Richard Carter distributed information about the May Days event at Heyden Park, planned for May 20-22nd, 2015.</p> <p>6. Concussion Policy Working Michelle McDonald reported that she is attending the April 28th meeting of the TDSB work group being led by Tracy Hayhurst, which is developing procedures for the new Concussion Policy.</p> | |
| <p>7. Business Arising</p> | <p>Business Arising from the March 2, 2015 Minutes</p> <p>1. Member participation at May 2nd Provincial SEAC Conference Chair Steven Lynette and new member Paula Boutis have volunteered – others invited include 1 experienced SEAC member, 1 trustee, 1 Special Education Supervising Officer. Nora Green and Trustee Brown volunteered to attend as part of the TDSB team.</p> <p>2. Assistive Technology Conference Report Superintendent Hainbuch, Richard Carter, Nora Green, Lisa Kness, Aline Chan and Jordan Glass attended the conference. Superintendent Hainbuch gave a brief report. Richard Carter gave a power point presentation and short video from the conference, illustrating how the featured Apple products can be used to increase accessibility. The suggestion was made that finding ways to fund greater use of innovative technology to help special needs learners should become a priority.</p> | |
| <p>8. Trustee Reports & Follow-Up on Previous Action Items</p> | <p>Trustee Tiffany Ford (W4) reported that the Budget was passed. She personally lobbied fellow trustees to say no to special education cuts. A motion on job cuts to eliminate 33.5 jobs was successfully amended to save 10 jobs in the support staff category. Trustee Ford also reported that she attended the Ward Council meeting, which included an excellent presentation on special education by TDSB Special Education consultant, Julia Carter</p> <p>On motion of Richard Carter, the meeting was extended by 15 minutes. All in favour.</p> <p>Trustee Alexander Brown (W12) reported briefly on his participation at the PIAC-SEAC Special Education Parent Conference. He facilitated a workshop about psychological assessments, where many of the questions focussed on identification of Giftedness, and attended the afternoon session about IPRCs. He described it as a good conference that was well-attended. Trustee Brown also drew member attention to the Barbara Hall panel on TDSB governance issues, which has provided an opportunity for the on-line submission of public input, as well as opportunities to register to attend public consultation sessions, which are scheduled in all parts of the city. The public can learn more</p> | <p>Motion carried</p> |

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| | <p>about the consultations at: http://consultationsontdsb.ca/consultations-on-tdsb</p> <p>Margo Ratsep undertook to re-send members the April 10th email inviting members of CACs to participate.</p> | |
| <p>9. Reports/Updates from Active SEAC Subcommittees</p> | <p>1. PIAC SEAC Parent Conference Subcommittee</p> <p>Clovis Grant reported briefly on the conference, for which approximately 200 parents pre-registered. He will report in more detail at the May meeting following the post-conference assessment meeting to be held later this month. Members commended the SEAC Liaison for her work in assisting with organizing the Conference.</p> <p>2. Special Education Plan Subcommittee</p> <p>Margo Ratsep reviewed the work of this subcommittee, whose purpose is to review amendments to the annual written plan detailing how Special Education programs and services are organized for 2015-2016. The following members volunteered for the committee: David Lepofsky, Diana Avon, Aline Chan, Trustee Brown, Jordan Glass, Richard Carter and Olga Ingrahm. Margo Ratsep will contact members to arrange meetings.</p> | |
| <p>10. Special Education Department Updates</p> | <p>Executive Superintendent Uton Robinson presented a Department Update and responded to questions. (See Page 8)</p> <p>Following his report, Superintendent Robinson informed SEAC about a fire that had occurred this day at Stephen Leacock, where 2 intensive support programs are located.</p> <p>Coordinating Superintendent Jeff Hainbuch reported briefly on the Review IPRCs held for primary students considering possible return to home schools. As the result of 420 reviews, 35 students are exiting Intensive Support Programs and returning to their neighbourhood schools. Supports will be in place, including transition meetings and professional development for staff. Principal advisory groups are meeting to support inclusion. He emphasized that the process is not for cost-saving, and that any savings would be limited since additional resources are often needed.</p> | |
| <p>1. Correspondence</p> | <p>Correspondence Received by the Chair</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Email dated March 30, 2015 from Sandy Spyropoulos, TDSB Executive Superintendent, Student Support Services and Care notifying interested SEAC members about the upcoming Mental Health Parent Symposium on May 9, 2015 at Earl Haig Secondary School 2. Copy of letter dated March 11, 2015 to Minister of Education Liz Sandals from Trustee Joyce Bennett, SEAC Chair for Thames Valley DSB re Ontario Regulation 274/12 Teacher Hiring Practices 3. Email dated April 1, 2015 from Diane Montgomery with attached application for SEAC membership, to fill the SE Community Representative vacancy. 4. Copy of letter dated February 11, 2015 to Minister of Education Liz Sandals and Minister of | |

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| | <p>Training, Colleges and Universities, Brad Duguid from Upper Grand DSB SEAC Chair, Carrie Proudfoot re mandatory Special Education preparatory courses for all teachers graduating from teacher education programs in Ontario.</p> <p>5. Emailed invitation to all TDSB Community Advisory Committees from Helen Fisher, Central Coordinating Principal, Model Schools for Inner Cities re hosting an information booth at the two Parent Academy Conference locations, April 18 and April 25, 2015</p> <p>6. Email dated April 8, 2015 from Dr. Steven Reid, Regional Manager Field Services, Toronto and Area Regional Office - Ministry of Education re Change in venue for Provincial SEAC Conference on May 2, 2015</p> <p>7. Email dated April 10, 2015 from John Manalo, Committee Assistant, TDSB Parent and Community Engagement Office re: Public Consultation on TDSB Governance Structure</p> | |
| <p>2. New Business</p> | <p>New Business</p> <p>1. Correspondence Item 1 – SEAC representation at Mental Health Parent Symposium Margo reported that Lisa Kness had expressed an interest in attending the symposium</p> <p>2. Correspondence Item 3 – Motion required re: Application for SEAC membership</p> <p>***MOTION: On motion of Trustee Ford: Whereas there is one vacancy for South East Community Representative on the Toronto District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and, Whereas Dianne Montgomery has applied for the position and meets board criteria for this vacancy and, Whereas no other applications have been received since November 2014, SEAC recommends that the Toronto District School Board appoint applicant Dianne Montgomery to the board’s SEAC as a South East Community Representative for the term ending November 30, 2018</p> <p>All in favour.</p> <p>3. Correspondence Item 5 – Decision re hosting and staffing booths at two Parent Academy Conference locations Steven Lynette volunteered to host an information booth at the Cedarbrae location. Margo Ratsep undertook to resend to members a copy of the invitation to participate.</p> <p>4. Requested Deputation Diana Avon received a request from a parent seeking SEAC support in petitioning the Ontario government to remove the SEAC membership requirement for Canadian citizenship. Discussion concluded that the best use of SEAC’s limited time is to use that time to advise the board rather than try to change legislation. It was recommended that a better way to bring that voice to the</p> | <p>Motion carried.</p> |

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| | <p>SEAC table is to inform SEAC members about the distinctive issues that face non-member families of children with special needs. Diana Avon undertook to inform the applicant of SEAC's decision.</p> <p>5. Requested change to September meeting date. A concern was expressed that the September 21st meeting conflicted with Yom Kippur. SEAC members clarified that Yom Kippur is marked on the calendar as September 22nd. The September meeting will remain as September 21st.</p> <p>6. Speaker invitation in June: Paula Boutis will provide at the May meeting background information about a prospective presentation for SEAC about Inclusive Practices.</p> | |
| <p>3. Agenda Setting</p> | <p>Agenda Setting for Future Meetings</p> <p>May Member Presentation – Brain Injury Society of Toronto Staff Presentation – Special Education Funding (Craig Snider) Conference Reports – PIAC-SEAC Conference and Provincial SEAC Conference</p> <p>Future Presentation/Consultation Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of Belonging Research (Gillian Parekh) • Assistive Technology Strategy • Special Education Support Staff • Refusal to Admit • Mental Health Strategy | |
| <p>4. Adjournment</p> | <p>On motion of Clovis Grant, the meeting adjourned at 9:36 p.m. All in favour.</p> | |

Upcoming SEAC meetings – Monday, May 4 and June 1, 2015

Uton Robinson – Special Education Department Update

Staff Change Announcement

I wish to acknowledge the contribution to TDSB Special Education Services made by Coordinating Superintendent Anne Seymour and thank her for her tremendous support over the past year. She has moved to a position as Coordinating Superintendent in Student Success, where they had need of her level of expertise. I know you will join me in welcoming our new Coordinating Superintendent, Ian Allison, who has recently assumed her responsibilities.

Special Education Staff Allocation for 2015-16

At the Board meeting on March 11, 2015 Trustees approved the TDSB operating budget and staffing levels for the 2015-16 school year. As a result of declining enrolment, there was a reduction of staffing positions for the next school year. The Special Education Staff Allocation process results in schools being staffed with a variety of teaching and support staff with different roles to meet students' needs. This allocation process is implemented in a transparent manner that engages special education central staff, Planning Department, Superintendents of Education and administrative staff responsible for schools. The following process was followed:

Intensive Support Program (ISP) Process

- Reviewed current delivery model and staff allocation by exceptionalities.
- Reviewed enrolment trends over the past 5 years and determined some closures based on that analysis.
- Adjusted potential targets & criteria as possible.
- Exceptionality Teams identified level of student needs for ISPs across system and developed a model of staff allocation.
- Regional teams reviewed the model to ensure that there were no gaps in ISP offerings.
- ISP requirements were shared with Superintendents of Education and numbers and sites were confirmed.
- Special Education staffed the ISPs using allocation criteria and *Potential Targets and Standards 2015-16*.

Results of ISP Allocation

- The overall allocation of teaching and support staff in ISPs decreased: 1943 ISP classes this year to 1897.5 ISP classes next year.
- Small increases were made to meet student needs in autism, FDK special education kindergartens and gifted classes.
- All students in Kindergarten Diagnostic classes will have a psychological assessment at the end of their stay in these classes, as appropriate
- Some ISP programs, with Superintendent of Education consultation, have been relocated in order to cluster similar classes, to facilitate more effective communities of learners so that staffing resources and facilities can be better utilized