

Approved Minutes

**Name of Committee:** Special Education Advisory Committee

**Meeting Date:** February 12, 2024from 7:00 p.m.– 9:11 p.m. (Hybrid)

**Chair:** **David Lepofsky**

**Vice-Chair:** **Richard Carter**

A meeting of the Special Education Community Advisory Committee convened on February 12, 2024, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:11 p.m. at 5050 Yonge Street,

**Attendance:**

**Members**:

Melissa Rosen Association for Bright Children (ABC)

Leo Lagnado Autism Society of Ontario (Toronto Chapter)

Richard Carter Down Syndrome Association of Toronto (DSAT)

Steven Lynette Epilepsy Toronto

Nora Green Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community

Diane Montgomery (Alternate) Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community

Guilia Barbuto Learning Disabilities Association Toronto District

Aline Chan (Alternate), Community Living

David Lepofsky Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC)

Dana Chapman (Alternate) Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC)

Bronwen Alsop VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

Stephany Ragany (Alternate) VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

Nerissa Hutchinson Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support

Trustee Michelle Aarts (Ward 16)

Saira Chhibber (LC1)

Jordan Glass (LC2)

Jean-Paul Ngana (LC2)

Kirsten Doyle (LC3)

Tracey O’Regan Community Living Toronto

Aliza Chaqpar Easter Seals Ontario

Reese Macklin alternate CADDAC

Izabella Pruska-Oldenhof (LC4)

Trustee Liban Hassan (Ward 6)

Beth Dangerfield CADDAC – Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada

 Ann Blanchette alternate Epilepsy Toronto

Trustee Zakir Patel (Ward 19)

**Regrets**

Julie Diamond Autism Society of Ontario (Toronto Chapter)

**Staff**

Louise Sirisko, Associate Director, Innovation and Equitable Outcomes

Nandy Palmer, System Superintendent, Special Education and Inclusion

Craig Snider, Executive Officer – Business Services

Krish Chakraborty - System Officer, Senior Legal Counsel

Vitaliy Plotnikov – Policy Coordinator – Policy Services

Alison Board, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education

Effie Stathopoulos, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education

Katia Palumbo. Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education

Andrea Roach, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education

Elizabeth Schaeffer, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education ECPP

Mun Shu Wong (Audio/Video); Erin Pallet (Audio/Video Assistant)

Elizabeth Chalmers, Administrative Liaison (SOE)

Lianne Dixon. TDSB SEAC Liaison

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| Item | Discussion | Action Items/Recommendation |
| Land Acknowledgement | Chair/Vice Chair Richard Carter |  |
| Approval of Agenda | Agenda Approval | Approval of the agenda –Nora Green approved the agendaSeconded - Leo Lagnado |
| Conflicts of interest |  | no conflicts identified |
| Approval of Minutes from January SEAC Meeting | Chair David Lepofsky asked for approval of the minutes | Moved to approve by Nora GreenSeconded by Tracy O’Regan |
| Chair’s Report | Chair – email Chair with your concerns if you have any; trying to move through the agenda based on time we have, The Action log was useful to keep things on track. Look at it again. Right now all items are resolved. |  |
| IPRC Appeals | * Special System Superintendent Nandy introduced Krish Chakraborty and Vitaliy Plotnikov.
* Krish Chakraborty shared a slide deck related to the IPRC Appeals Process:
* IPRC – if a parent is not in favour of the decision, the family can appeal to the SEAB (Special Education Appeal Board). This is a body that can make recommendations, but TDSB is not obligated to implement the recommendations.
* The question was asked as to who at TDSB decides to follow SEAB? The province does not specify which body decides this. We need to know the position of the board's legal counsel if it is Trustees or is it so ambiguous you do not know the answer
* TDSB is required to follow Regulation 181/98 which sets out the appeal process for parents/guardians/caregivers
* SEAB – a hearing is conducted hearing both parents and school and they make a recommendation. The Board determines whether to implement or not. Regulation 181/98 is very ambiguous and the terminology of Board is not sufficiently defined and there is no law that actually sheds light on who the Board is (trustees, staff).
* We looked at other school boards and they have different approaches to what is meant by “the Board”.
* The report seeking GPC (Governance Policy Committee) approval will be provided at a subsequent GPC meeting and will include a recommended action for the Board to delegate authority to TDSB staff committee to make decisions related to appeals. This operational procedure is expected to take effect in September 2024.

The overall process needs to be looked at and we need trained staff for a committee to make equitable, correct decisions. There was discussion among members about who should be responsible for making decisions regarding SEABs. Some felt Trustees should be involved and others felt Principals and Special Education staff were better equipped to do it. Concerns were raised about the perception that Trustees are not equipped to make decisions. However, it was clarified that it was actually the Trustees who asked for this review because they were not sure that they had the expertise to make those decisions. Some SEAC members disagreed with TDSB counsel’s claim that the term “Board” is ambiguous”. It can be taken as meaning what it says, namely the board of trustees. |   |
| Budget Update | Craig Snider – Shared a presentation on the budget, going through the areas where funding needs to be reviewed to balance the budget.Feb 14 FBEC (Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee) – There is a change to the budget schedule. The updated schedule was shared with SEAC and included in the handouts.We are not looking to Spec Ed for significant changes to Spec Ed if any.  |  |
| Budget Motion | Budget MotionChair David Lepofsky brought forward a motion:SEAC recommends to the TDSB trustees that the forthcoming TDSB budget should ensure that there are no cuts to services, supports, learning opportunities or resources for students with special education needs. Those students require an increase to the services, supports and staffing provided for them.” | Leo Lagnada moved the motionNora Green seconded the motionMotion Passed**Nora Green is assigned by SEAC Chair David Lepofsky present this to the FBEC Committee** |
| SEAC Priorities | SEAC PrioritiesThe Chair asked each member to share priorities from their Association or Learning Centre.Additional priorities will be collected via email.Community Living – Exclusions, when families are being asked to pick up children how are their absences coded? How supports are allocated per school and per regular classroomLC 1 Jordan Glass – numbers of support staff, number of teacher absences and effects on studentsIntegrated Action for Inclusion – exclusions, duty to accommodate, on-going system learning (abilities, exceptionalities), outcomes for students ( i.e. graduation)Epilepsy Toronto – a flexible curriculum, improving parental involvement and more inclusivity; parental rights, advocacy education; educator training (consistent high-quality training to all staff, all levels).,David Lepofsky - Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children: Protections for students with low-incidence disabilities, and for everyone, a fairer process of involving parents of students with special education needs in decisions regarding the needs of their children. | SEAC PrioritiesSend an email to Lianne Dixon with your prioritiesLianne Dixon to compile the list of SEAC priorities (please refer to SEAC member emails) |
| Leadership Report  | Associate Director Louise SiriskoSystem Superintendent Nandy PalmerSystem Superintendent Nandy Palmer shared the report * Encourage SEAC Members to Dr. Gillian Parekh book Ableism in Education. An offer was made to purchase a copy for SEAC members who are interested
* SIP Rebate – (Special Incidence Portion) The Ministry is using a formula for SIP claims and we are roughly receiving $15 million for 2023-2024
* There is a slight increase in projected enrolment for 2024-2025 based on newcomers to Canada

Concerns were raised about AI and accessibility. Currently TDSB does not use AI. TDSB uses assistive technology, but we will continue to work with Microsoft and accessibility features in the future. | Special Education and Inclusion Department to purchase Ableism in Education book for interested SEAC members |
| Trustees Report  | TrusteesMichelle Aarts forwarded her report to be shared with SEAC members. | Report was shared electronically with members |
| Association and Community UpdatesWorking Group Updates (on request) | Working Groups* Special Education Plan Working Group -– Spec Ed feedback door is technically closed but send any other feedback to Melissa. Keep the feedback coming
* Priority Working Group – Doing feedback from the group as a whole rather than a working group.
* A list of acting working groups will be shared.
* Chair David Lepofsky proposed a new Terms of Reference working group to look at the ToR in June

Associations* Autism Ontario (distributed) – World Autism Day April 2, 2024 – they have tool kits for the public

Please spread the word |  |
| * Other Business
* Correspondence
* Adjournment

**Next meeting** * March 18
 | Motion to extend for 10 minutes Other BusinessConcerns were raised about the new CAC procedures and that SEAC was not given adequate time to respond and share their concerns about changes that impact SEAC. Rather than present and pass a motion expressing these concerns, the chair offered to write a letter to Trustees on behalf of SEAC. This letter will be distributed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees and with all SEAC members.Melissa Rosen – other business – Would like to have light meals/refreshments at SEAC meetings going forward. We have received a number of responses at least 8-10 comments and hope we can consider this to be revived.Motion to adjourn at 9:11 p.m.  | Nora Green moved the motion to extend the meeting for ten minutesLeo Lagnada seconded the motionThe motion passedLeo Lagnada moved to adjourn the meeting. Melissa Rosen seconded it. |