SEAC Motion June 10, 2024

The Right of Parents, Guardians and Students with Disabilities/Special Education Needs to Know about TDSB Programs, Services, and Supports, and How to Access Them

Whereas students with disabilities/special education needs and their parents/guardians have a right to user-friendly access to important information about the programs, services, supports and educational offerings available for them at TDSB and how to access them. This should be easy to find, written in plain language without education jargon, and available in multiple languages and multiple formats, including accessible formats.

And whereas for over eight years, SEAC has repeatedly told senior TDSB officials that too many families find it hard to find this information. They find this very frustrating. This undermines their ability to advocate for their child’s needs.

And whereas TDSB has told SEAC that it is the responsibility of each principal to convey this information to parents and guardians of students with special education needs, and that parents can look to TDSB’s website, its Special Education Plan posted there, and some brochures. Yet SEAC has advised TDSB that this is not an effective solution.

And whereas TDSB’s 2024 Multi-Year Strategic Plan commits to treating parents as partners and to “Identifying, removing, and preventing systemic, procedural, and attitudinal barriers that stand in the way of equity of access and outcomes in education.”

SEAC therefore recommends that the TDSB Board should

1. As a priority, create and implement a strong, comprehensive action plan to fully, effectively and pro-actively inform all parents/guardians/students, including parents/guardians of students with disabilities/special education needs, about the programs, supports, services and educational offerings that could assist students with disabilities/special education needs, and where and how to access and advocate for them, and

2. report by the end of 2024 and every six months after that to the Board and to SEAC on their progress.