



Toronto District School Board
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee Name: Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
Date: Monday, May 4, 2015
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Present: Diana Avon, Paula Boutis, Alexander Brown, Richard Carter, Aline Chan, Paul Cross, Catherine Drillis, Deborah Fletcher, Jordan Glass, Clovis Grant, Nora Green, Margarita Isakov, Howard Kaplan, Lisa Kness, Mark Kovats, Steven Lynette, Michelle McDonald, Jean-Paul Ngana, Phillip Sargent, Cynthia Springings, Ken Stein
Regrets: Adebukola Adenowo-Akpan, Trustee Tiffany Ford, Olga Ingrahm
Staff: Uton Robinson, Anne Seymour, Jeff Hainbuch, Margo Ratsep
Guests: Craig Snider, Comptroller, Budget, Revenue and Financial Reporting, Toronto District School Board
Recorder: Margo Ratsep

ITEM	DISCUSSION	RECOMMENDATION/ MOTION
1. Call to Order/Quorum	A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was convened at 7:05 pm on Monday, May 4, 2015 in the Board Room, 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario with Steven Lynette presiding as Chair.	
2. Approval of Agenda	Motion: Clovis moved that the agenda be approved. All in favour	Motion carried.
3. Declaration of Possible Conflicts of Interest	None received.	
4. Confirmation of Minutes	Motion: Trustee Kaplan moved that the Minutes of the April 13, 2015 meeting be approved.	
5. Presentations/Delegations	<p>1. Michelle McDonald, Executive Director, Brain Injury Association of Toronto (BIST) and SEAC Alternate gave a presentation explaining the complexities of Brain Injury and spoke about the work of the association in helping families adjust to their “new normal”. The service focus is on education, awareness, support and advocacy. Activities include, Monthly Monday meetings, Family Support Program, Concussion Series, Peer Mentor Support Program, half and full-day retreats, Personal Development and Education Workshops, Social/Recreational Events, awareness events/campaigns and collaborative work with Community Partnerships. All services are provided through fund-raising.</p> <p>Website: www.bist.ca Blog: http://torontobraininjuryblog.com Phone: 416-830-1485</p>	

	<p>2. Special Education Budget Consultation Presentation</p> <p>Craig Snider distributed the following documents to everyone in attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SEAC Power point presentation - 2014: SB04 – from last spring – explains how HNA is calculated moving forward - 2015: SB05 – (referred to on presentation page 2 – the Ministry of Education is maintaining the current funding levels of the High Needs Amount in 2014-2015 and are holding the provincial HNA total at \$1.05 billion over the four year transition, but they don't state what will happen after the four year transition period). - 2015: B07 – Grants for Student Needs Funding 2015-16 (referred to on presentation page 3, explaining the major changes to funding). <p>Craig explained that the memos provide details about Ministry use of a statistical model for calculations rather than real time information, but the demographics change from year to year. Under the statistical model being used, funding projections remain unclear, with continued funding reductions anticipated.</p>	
<p>6. SEAC Business & Open Discussion</p>	<p>1. Special Education Budget</p> <p>SEAC Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that these kinds of information materials be distributed to SEAC members well ahead of the meeting, so they have an opportunity to digest the information and understand it better. <p>ACTIONS:</p> <p>a) Craig undertook to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distribute the technical paper explaining the calculations, and • provide data illustrating special education deficit spending over the last 5 years, in actual dollars and as a % of the TDSB budget, for comparison to see how we are progressing over the last 4-5 years. • go over the 2016 budget at the September SEAC meeting <p>b) Uton undertook to provide a breakdown of the numbers in the ADE Self-Contained Classes list.</p> <p>2. Provincial SEAC Conference Report</p> <p>Members who attended reported briefly on the Conference and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to converse with members of other SEACs. Steven Lynette drew attention to the letter and congratulatory certificate from the Minister of Education, giving recognition to the committed work of the Toronto District School Board SEAC.</p>	

	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That TDSB consider holding a Regional SEAC Meeting as other SEACs have held. A Parents Reaching Out Grant can be applied for to help fund this. • That SEAC schedule at the start of each meeting, an opportunity to hear a “parent voice” and a “student voice”, to hear perspectives about what works and what doesn’t work as well in terms of special education programs and services. • SEAC invite new Trustees to informally attend SEAC to learn more about special education <p>ACTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Paula Boutis undertook to collect notes from members who attended the Conference and to provide a more detailed report for the June meeting. b) Margo Ratsep undertook to provide a digital copy of the presentation made to TDSB SEAC and to post it on the SEAC webpages. 	
<p>7. Business Arising</p>	<p>1. Code of Conduct</p> <p>Paula Boutis spoke to a draft SEAC Code of Conduct distributed by email to members. She invited input into two items in the draft code – Item 2 Responsibility and Item 6 Discipline. During discussion, the first three bullets under 4.3 Roles and Responsibilities were questioned as being more governance-related than applicable to a Code of Conduct. The suggestion was made to omit item 4.4 Discipline, with the intent to deal with any possible problematic conduct at the time it occurs.</p> <p>ACTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Members are to review the draft, and provide feedback to the whole group by email, expressing concerns and providing suggestions. b) Paula Boutis undertook to set up a Google Docs Link. She highlighted the need for input to sections 2.0 and 4.4. <p>2. Concussion Policy</p> <p>Ian Allison spoke briefly on the work of the committee developing the TDSB Concussion Policy. Michelle McDonald reported attended last Tuesday’s meeting. The Policy was approved in March but the committee is now working on the procedures. She has offered BIST as a resource during the development of the procedures and will keep SEAC posted.</p> <p>3. Presentation on Inclusion</p> <p>Paula provided the biographical information about proposed guest presenter Erin Sheldon and offered three options. Paula undertook to construct a Survey Monkey to collect member preference for specific Inclusion topic. Chair Steven Lynette will determine the date for the presentation in collaboration with TDSB special education</p>	

	department staff.	
8. Trustee Reports & Follow-Up on Previous Action Items	<p>Trustee Brown reported on a number of topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Primary Inclusion update is now posted on the board website. The Update includes information as of January 27th 2015 on the implementation process for conducting IPRC reviews for Primary programs, provides charts with numbers and includes the script used in schools for the IPRCs. 2. The Board will be providing Technical Briefings to the media about the capitol budget, which will also highlight the gaps to funding. These will be made available to the public. Trustee Brown will undertake to share it with SEAC before it goes public. 3. Trustee Brown sought input from members about how they would like invitations to trustees to attend a SEAC meeting be carried out. Members were asked to give this thought for the next meeting. 4. Relatively few parents have been signing up for the consultations. He will update SEAC on TDSB public consultations by providing the information to the SEAC Liaison for distribution, when a statement is ready. 	
9. Reports/Updates from Active SEAC Subcommittees	<p>PIAC-SEAC Parent Conference Report (Clovis Grant)</p> <p>Members received a summary of the evaluation from the feedback from the conference. There were 172 actual participants of the 211 who pre-registered but didn't attend. Some lost attendance was made up by 62 walk-ins. 50 evaluations were completed and handed in. Clovis reviewed the evaluation findings. A number of decisions needed to be made about the conference:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does SEAC support another conference – All were in agreement 2. The proposed conference date is April 2, 2016 – Members are to check the holiday calendar and agency commitments for April 2, 2016 3. Members are invited to increase participation as Co-Presenters 4. More SEAC members are needed on the Conference Planning Committee 5. A PRO Grant application is required. The Chair will apply (Margo Ratsep to send previous PRO grant application to Steven Lynette.) <p>On motion of Richard Carter the meeting was extended by 15 minutes.</p>	
10. Special Education Department Updates	<p>Department updates were provided by Uton Robinson, Ian Allison and Jeff Hainbuch. (See page 7-8.)</p> <p>ABC Representative Diana Avon recommended that a "Gifted screening tool" not be the only thing considered in the identification process.</p>	
11. Correspondence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Copy of letter dated March 17, 2015 to Minister of Education Liz Sandals from Kay Gaffney, SEAC Chair, Northeastern Catholic DSB re Ontario Regulation 274/12 Hiring 	

	<p>Practices.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Copy of letter dated March 30, 2015 to Minister of Education Liz Sandals from Bev Clarke, SEAC Chair, Greater Essex County DSB re Ontario Regulation 274/12 3. Copy of letter dated March 10, 2015 to Mr. Michael Barrett, President OPSBA from Laura Sylvestre, Chair Lakehead DSB re: in support of November 25, 2014 Thames Valley letter on lack of service supports and assessment mechanisms for students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). 4. Copy of letter dated 25 November 2014 to Michael Barrett, President OPSBA from Ruth Tisdale, Board Chair, Thames Valley DSB re lack of service supports and assessment mechanisms for students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). 5. Email dated April 22, 2015 from Denise Joseph-Dowers, TDSB Governance Coordinator re: invitation to Chairs of TDSB Advisory Committees to attend the PSSC meeting on April 29 (and to all future PSSC meetings) to present their committee's updates and reports. 6. Email dated April 27, 2015 from Roula Anastasakos, Executive Superintendent, Board, Policy, Research & Information Services re: invitation to all CACs for representation at a focus group session on a new "Whistleblower Policy". 7. Email dated April 27, 2015 from Sandy Spyropoulos, Executive Superintendent, Student Support Services and Care inviting SEAC to have a display at the May 9th Parent Symposium 8. Letter dated May 1, 2015 from Barry Finlay, Director, Special Education Policy and Program Branch, Ministry of Education responding to letter of April 9, 2015 from Steven Lynette, SEAC Chair, TDSB 	
<p>12. Member Announcements</p>	<p>Down Syndrome Association representative Richard Carter distributed information about the 3rd Annual Buddy Walk taking place Saturday, May 9th, 2015 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Woodbine Ashbridge's Bay Park. Onsite registration/check-in starts at 10:00 a.m. with the walk starting at 11:00 a.m.</p>	
<p>13. New Business</p>	<p>Proposal for June meeting – Setting Guiding Priorities</p> <p>IEWS representative, David Lepofsky spoke to the need for SEAC to set priorities for achieving its mandate to advise the TDSB on how to do a better job in the education of students with special needs. SEAC members have experience and ideas but agendas sometimes limit the opportunity to share it. He proposed setting aside a good amount of time at the June meeting to permit each person to identify their top three priorities to advise the board. This exercise would help members learn more about each other and the ideas presented would help in identifying priorities for SEAC to focus on. He further suggested that SEAC form a small work group to develop a select list of priorities for SEAC to focus</p>	

	<p>on, from those suggested. He suggested it would likely boil down to three or four major themes that can be blocked out for consultation input over the year. This process would assist SEAC in coming to the board with advice on what the board is doing well and what changes could improve the delivery of special education programs and services.</p> <p>SEAC recommendations:</p> <p>a) That this priority setting exercise take place at the June meeting.</p> <p>b) That the attendees at the Provincial SEAC Conference present recommendations resulting from the conference and share with all members the online webpage of conference presentations.</p>	
<p>14. Agenda Setting</p>	<p>June</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusive Practices 2. Priority Setting 3. Code of Conduct <p>September</p> <p>Budget – Craig Snider to review the final 2015-2016 budget</p> <p>Held Over Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of Belonging • Special Education Support Staff • Refusal to Admit • Mental Health Strategy • Assistive Technology Strategy 	
<p>15. Adjournment</p>	<p>Richard Carter moved adjournment at 9:28</p>	

Next Meeting Date: June 1, 2015

Special Education Department Updates

Uton Robinson, Executive Superintendent, Special Education and Section Programs

In recent history, research around Education and pedagogy has supported adopting inclusive models in both school structures and service delivery. A number of factors have culminated to create the push towards greater inclusion of students with Special Education needs into more regular classrooms. During the 2015-2016, school year. Students in Grades 4-8 with Mild Intellectual Disabilities, Learning Disabilities and Behaviour Identification will be intentionally reviewed at their annual IPRC meeting to determine if they would benefit from continuing their education in a regular class setting. There are approximately 1600 students in these Grades with these needs.

Strategies and approaches to inclusion in the regular classroom are important in developing a high quality inclusive experience for students with Special Education needs. Generally, strategies are not geared towards students with specific needs but are instead designed to be implemented across all exceptionality categories by using the principles of Universal Design, differentiated and tiered approaches in classroom practices of instruction and assessment and an environment of high expectation for all students. 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 learning environment.

IEP Development Update

As of April 24, 2015, there were **51,785** IEPs in progress across the TDSB. Of these **51,785** IEPs that have been developed:

- **32,780** (63%) are for male students and **19,005** (37%) are for female students.
- Approximately **42%** (**21,996**) of students with IEPs are exceptional and **58%** (**29,785**) are not identified as having an exceptionality.
- Approximately **66%** of students are supported in the Resource program and **34%** in HSP and ISP classes.
- Of those students who are exceptional, **43%** are supported in the Resource program and **57%** are supported in HSP or ISP classes.
- Of those students who are not exceptional, **81%** are supported in the Resource program and **16%** are supported in HSP or ISP classes.
- Grade level distribution shows that the greatest numbers of IEPs are for students in grade **12 (6,229)**, **grade 6 (4,688)**, **grade 8 (4,634)**, **grade 5 (4,575)** and **grade 7 (4,482)**.
- The lowest numbers are for students in **Junior and Senior Kindergarten (1,448)** and **grade 1 (1,656)**.

Ian Allison, Coordinating Superintendent

The province is engaged in a review of Giftedness and preliminary steps are being taken to review the TDSB Gifted screening tool. TDSB stands out in comparison to the rest of the province in how Gifted identification is carried out and needs to bring its practices more in line with what is happening across the province. This involves exploring processes used for screening for Giftedness, which elsewhere make use of multiple criteria. Only 48 to 50%



of TDSB students moving to assessment for Giftedness actually qualify. A goal is to improve the accuracy of screening. Additionally, the process currently in use is not as equitable across the system as it needs to be, so TDSB will be re-examining what can be done to address this issue. A screening tool also needs to provide useful information on learning needs of the students for the teachers.

Jeff Hainbuch, Coordinating Superintendent

TDSB is also looking into the need for students to have equitable access to Gifted secondary programs across the district. In some parts of the city, students live great distances from the closest Gifted program. The review is in its early stages, with planned community consultations in each of the four quadrants. Results from the consultations will be shared with SEAC.

SEAC members have the opportunity to attend a full day staff in-service session with Apple similar to the workshop already attended by some SEAC reps. The sessions will take place on May 7, 8 and 19 downtown. These workshops will focus more on Speech & Language pathology. There is room for up to 5 SEAC members per day. Members interested in attending are invited to email Jeff to reserve a space.