# Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

MEETING NOTICE – Monday, April 9, 2018 at 7:00 pm

Association for Bright Children (ABC) Melissa Rosen

Autism Society of Ontario – Toronto Lisa Kness

Brain Injury Society of Toronto (BIST) Cynthia Sprigings

Community Living Toronto *vacancy*

Down Syndrome Association of Toronto Richard Carter

Easter Seals Ontario Deborah Fletcher

Epilepsy Toronto regrets

Integrated Action for Inclusion (IAI) Kim Southern-Paulsen

Learning Disabilities Association Toronto *vacancy*

VIEWS for the Visually Impaired David Lepofsky

VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children Paul Cross

TDSB North East Community Aline Chan Jean Paul Ngana Nelson Lui

TDSB North West Community Curtis Bulatovich

TDSB South East Community Diane Montgomery Dick Winters

TDSB South West Community Paula Boutis Nora Green Jordan Glass

TDSB Trustees Alexander Brown Alexandra Lulka

Regrets: Margarita Isakov (Integration Action for Inclusion), Steven Lynette (Epilepsy)

TDSB Staff Present: Uton Robinson, Executive Superintendent, Special Education and Section Programs,

Lori Moore, Centrally Assigned Principal for Special Education, Craig Snider, Executive Officer, Finance, Sandra Tondat, Superintendent, Learning Network 27

Cynthia Zwicker-Reston, Centrally Assigned Principal, Learning Centre 3

Lianne Dixon, SEAC Liaison

Minutes by: Lianne Dixon

**MINUTES (DRAFT)**

*(All notes included in these minutes are paraphrased by the recorder.)*

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm

1. **Declaration of Possible Conflicts of Interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

1. **Approval of the Minutes for SEAC Meeting of Monday, March 5, 2018**

Change in attendance – Rosary Kwak was added to attendance from last meeting – then a motion to approve the Minutes was made by Curtis Bulatovich, seconded by Lisa Kness. The revised minutes have been posted on the SEAC website.

1. Craig Snider, Executive Officer, Finance, presented information about new announcements from the Ministry of Education around Special Education. Further details will be coming soon. The areas that are receiving new funding are to support:
   1. Assessments (backlogged),
   2. special education teams,
   3. mental health,
   4. guidance (transition to high school)

Craig Snider and special education staff in attendance took questions from SEAC members.

Q. Is funding change going to affect ABA service delivery?

A. No change in services is anticipated – there is a change in which “envelope” the funding is in – but it is still considered “sweatered”

Q. Work experience amount – is there a portion that will be allocated to students with disabilities?

A. We don’t have an answer to that question yet.

Q. SIP amount has increased – has the criteria changed?

A. As far as we know it is just a funding change – not a criteria change.

Q. Last month Craig Snider offered to take into consideration any recommendation that SEAC might want to make. Can you come back with suggestions of how and when we can be engaged during the process, rather than after the fact?

A. We are working on a multi-year plan as part of the strategic plan. As part of EETF, one of the things is looking at resource allocation to ensure they are equitable Craig explained that he would be happy to come up with a plan for consultation, but is not sure of timing. He can’t guarantee consultation before this June’s budget because of very short timelines.

Q How can you provide opportunities for feedback between meetings?

A. We can use email to provide input between SEAC meetings.

Q. Childcare subsidies were announced. Do we see an impact?

A. Increase is welcomed – don’t think we will see a change in enrolment. We look at it as a positive.

Q. Increased funding for special education – where will the biggest relief be in TDSB and where will there still be pressures?

A. We welcome the announcements. We know where our growth areas are, for example, students on the autism spectrum. Also, we are happy that it was announced that the pilot project from the Ministry around ABI and dedicated space in schools will continue into next year. Areas related to guidance (transition) need more attention and support.

Q. What is the role of the special education department on the team that is working on the budget?

A. The Senior team is working on the multi-year plan; they are getting feedback through ward forums and community meetings.

Q. How are we supporting students with ASD with the new funding?

A. This year there has been training for regular and special education teachers around ABA. We continue to work with partners to support learning. The Connections Team work one on one with students entering the system.

Q. How much money is given for professional learning for the system for special education? Much of the money is put towards human resources, not professional learning for those special class teachers.

A. Special education works with other departments. They come together to ensure professional learning occurs. Recently there was a session on PPM 140 and how it relates to ABA strategies. Coaches from Teaching and Learning as well as special education staff worked together. Special education has adequate funding to ensure professional learning is happening on a regular basis.

Q. 14.3 million dollars for staff for mental health – do we know what that will look like?

A. The funding announcement speaks to supports for students and assessment. It is also to work with agencies to support secondary students.

Q. With the training of staff with more ASD awareness and understanding, will that minimize the role of the ASD team?

A. This training is of a tier 1 nature. The ASD team will continue to respond to tier 3 situations. This support is generated through access forms and based on student needs.

Q. If teachers are qualified, they don’t need a letter of permission. What percentage of teachers are working with a letter of permission?

A. A percentage or number will be determined and shared with SEAC.

Q. Two years ago, we were able to get a chart with a breakdown by exceptionalities – can we get this chart again? Can it be provided every year?

A. We can provide it going forward.

1. **Staff Updates and Requests for SEAC input**

Executive Superintendent Robinson shared highlights from his Department Report and answered questions/received feedback from SEAC members.

**Highlights:**

* **Parent Guide to Special Education** – It is in Word Format. The most updated copy should indicate September 2017. Some administrators were using an old copy. We have updated the website and the September 2017 version is accessible to parents and staff. We have included a link to the SEAC membership as well.
* Looking at the Multi-year plan, we will obviously continue to support special education students based on parental choice – including gifted ISP’s and congregated sites.
* We will continue to address attitudes, ensuring all students are welcome in all community schools and looking to see how we can put things in place so that it is positive process for families.
* We are continuing to look at the IPRC and IEP process, taking into consideration suggestions from SEAC and making sure parents are heard.
* Parents who desire a home school placement with appropriate accommodations and modifications will be given that placement through the IPRC process.
* Inclusive education – April 20th – Dr. David Mitchell from New Zealand, is coming to do a presentation around inclusion and integration. SEAC members have been invited to attend.
* Professional learning continues to be front and centre. We will ensure that there are essentials that all staff will need to have to work with students with special needs.
* We need to figure out how to be more transparent about the outcomes that students have based on the placement that parents are requesting. We want to be more explicit that there are differences in trajectories that we need to consider when making certain placements.
* World Down Syndrome Awareness Day was celebrated across the board.
* On Autism awareness day there were flag raising ceremonies at the three education centres. In addition, a number of staff and students went downtown to City Hall to participate and celebrate.
* “After Four” initiative was a TDSB six week after school leisure program that was offered in four centres. Approximately 30 students with ASD participated. Students participated in leisure activities based on their personal choices and there were observations of vast improvement in many different areas.

* The question was raised as to whether the board ever has had an Auditory-Verbal Therapist (AVT)? Executive Superintendent Robinson offered to look into that line on the chart from his report and whether the board is looking to hire one. The SEAC member from VOICE explained that AVT is an approach used for children who are using technology to learn to listen and speech. He offered to send out an email explanation of the AVT role.

* There was discussion around outcomes for students with intellectual disabilities and that parents need to know if they take certain placements there are implications around some options that may not be available to them in the future – particularly at secondary school. Adults with disabilities are leaving the school system with a variety of certificates/certification. The point was also raised that there is no support for post 21 students in continuing education, Executive Superintendent Robinson explained that we are tasked with serving the needs of students from kindergarten to 21 and that the funding for post 21 is very different. We do not get any funding for students over 21.

1. **Trustee Report – (Trustees Brown and Lulka)**

* Multiyear strategic plan – this is a very important plan that is Trustee driven. It impacts all other plans and will specify what goals are being set as well as what strategies will be put in place to meet those goals, and what monitoring will take place.
* There is a survey on the board website that anyone can access to provide input.
* SEAC should be involved in this process by making written and presented delegations.
* The multi-year plan is a balance of recommendations from parents and staff.
* Parent voice is paramount.
* Part of our feedback should be the motions that were passed by SEAC.

The question was raised as to whether it is possible to get the links to the projects that Rob Brown has done. They can be sent out to SEAC members and the links included in the minutes. See below:

<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/research/>

<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/research/Research/Publications>

7. **Motion - SEAC Elections (P. Boutis April 9, 2018)**

Discussion took place around the background for this Motion.

* There were two motions circulating around this topic. David Lepofsky withdrew his motion and the motion by Paula Boutis that was distributed to SEAC members on April 7 was the version that was discussed and voted on.
* It is just a recommendation in the Terms of Reference that a Trustee hold either the Chair or Vice Chair position – it is not binding.
* It is great to have a trustee who is engaged and wants to be Chair/Vice-Chair and definitely is a goal but may not always be practical.
* There is Trustee turnover and often a knowledge gap around special education. We have been very lucky to have Trustee Brown who is knowledgeable and supportive of special education.

1. It is an election year so we can’t know who will be returning and who might be interested or who will stay.
2. The suggestion was made to take the Motion to the board’s legal staff to look at it in advance of the Committee meeting in case there are questions about it. Executive Superintendent Robinson was asked to route it to legal before it goes to Committee.

After discussion, the Motion was moved by Curtis Bulatovich, seconded by Paula Boutis and passed unanimously.

1. **Motion – Independent Review (D. Lepofsky April 9, 2018)**

Discussion took place around the background of this Motion.

* Attempts were made through consultation with the Enhancing Equity Task Force to take into consideration the 6 Motions (corrected to 7 through a request by Melissa Rosen to include the latest motion passed in December) from SEAC that had been passed in the last two years. These were not taken into consideration, so the member is bringing forward this motion.
* In addition, SEAC presented our parent survey describing difficulties that parents are having. We proposed an internal right of appeal, and none of it has been implemented. The member appealed to SEAC members to to ask trustees to hire an independent consultant and do an independent review.
* Since this is a Trustee election year, we need to send the message that we want them acting on it. The next six months are the time they are the most responsive.

Motion (amended to indicate 7 motions instead of 6) was moved by Curtis Bulantovich, and seconded by Jordan Glass. It passed unanimously.

Motion was made to extend the meeting for 15 minutes.

1. **Barriers that Impact Students with Disabilities - David Lepofsky**

David Lepofsky, who has been appointed to the K-12 Education Standards Development Committee, reached out to members to get input on what disability barriers students with disabilities in K-12 education now face. SEAC members brainstormed the following barriers.

What are the barriers in our schools that impact students with disabilities and what should the promised Education Accessibility Standard address?

* Behaviour barriers
* Accessibility and staffing are related
* Space – you need empty space – spaces are sometimes why kids can stay at school
* Lack of physically accessible schools – ramps, elevators,
* Ableism biases
* Support and knowledge barrier – schools need to make students and families welcome
* Collective agreement can be a barrier – as far as hiring practices
* Attitudinal barriers
* Biases
* Education Act – the whole establishment of special education classes provide a really old way of thinking about disability

1. **ABC Membership Motion**

Motion to appoint Melissa Rosen as representative for the Association for Bright Children, and Gail Agensky to be the alternate representative was moved by Curtis Bulantovich. It was seconded by Aline Chan and passed unanimously.

1. **Association Reports**

* Nora Green delegated at the PSSP Meeting in support of Chris Glover, representing SEAC.
* An invitation was shared with SEAC members to participate the French Review CAC.
* A Motion was made that Nora Green and Paula Boutis attend this consultation meeting. This Motion passed unanimously.

1. **Correspondence**

* Chair Richard Carter noted correspondence from the Grand Erie SEAC sharing their letter to the Ministry of Education.
* He also noted correspondence from the Toronto Family Network requesting information about the status of the parent survey and the actions that have been taken based on preliminary results. David Lepofsky told SEAC that further results of the survey were being compiled by Osgoode Hall law students and would be shared with SEAC in the near future. When these results are available, they will be presented to SEAC.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

**Next meeting is May 7, 2018 at 7:00 pm**