**SEAC Meeting**

**Date: 4 March, 2019   Location: Board Room, 5050 Yonge St.**

**Time: 7:00**

**Committee Chair:   Richard Carter**

**Committee Vice-Chair:  Steven Lynette**

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee convened on March 4, 2019 from 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm in the TDSB Cafeteria (5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, ON).

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**Attendance:**

Association for Bright Children (ABC) Melissa Rosen

Autism Society of Ontario – Toronto Lisa Kness

Community Living Toronto Tracey O’Regan

Down Syndrome Association of Toronto Richard Carter

Easter Seals Ontario Deborah Fletcher

Epilepsy Toronto Steven Lynette

Integrated Action for Inclusion (IAI) Tania Principe (phone)

Learning Disabilities Association Toronto Regrets

VIEWS for the Visually Impaired David Lepofsky

VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children Paul Cross

LC1 Nora Green Aline Chan

LC2 Jean-Paul Ngana Jordan Glass

LC3 Olga Ingrahm Kirsten Doyle

LC4 Diane Montgomery Paula Boutis

TDSB Trustees Trustee Alexander Brown, Trustee Alexandra Lulka

**Also present were:**

Kathy Witherow, Associate Director, Leadership, Learning and School Improvement

Brendan Browne, Executive Superintendent, Leadership, Learning and School Improvement

Vicky Branco, System Superintendent, Leadership, Learning and School Improvement

Craig Snider, Associate Director

Lianne Dixon, TDSB SEAC Liasion

Regrets: Patrick Smith (Learning Disabilities Association Toronto)

**APPROVED MINUTES**

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|  | **Item** | **Comment** | **Recommendation/**  **Motion** |
| 1. | Call to Order (quorum) - Acknowledgement and Welcome and Introductions, TDSB Staff, Guests and Observers; announce call-in attendees and audio recording of meeting. |  |  |
| 2. | Approval of Agenda | Approved |  |
| 3 | Reflection/Mindful Moment | In recognition of World Down Syndrome Day later this month (March 21) Kimberly Weir presented a PowerPoint showcasing her experiences and other activities she has enjoyed through Special Olympics including winning the 2018 Doug Holyday Special Olympics Scholarship. She answered questions from SEAC members. |  |
| 4. | Declarations of Possible Conflict of Interests | None |  |
| 5. | Approval of SEAC Meeting Minutes for February 4, 2019 | Approved with two amendments  Revised minutes will be distributed and posted on the public website | Amendment to minutes Jean Paul Ngana.  Add David Lepofsky’s email referred to in the draft minutes as requested and approved at the meeting. |
| 6. | Budget Process Update   * Current status * Budget Working Group update | Craig Snider presented information about the budget process   * Annual operating budget is approximately $3.4B;   Funding Sources:   * Provincial Grants $2.9B; and * Other Revenues $0.5B. * As the Board considers the development of their strategic drivers that support the MYSP, difficult choices will need to be made; and * Even if provincial funding does not change, the Board will still need to review current allocation patterns to implement the MYSP. * As part of the 2019-20 budget process the Board will use the MYSP to set the budget drivers on which to allocate resources. * <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/Multi-Year-Strategic-Plan> * <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/leadership/board_room/Multi-Year_Strategic_Plan_AODA.pdf> * Drivers have been developed by Trustees   Feedback on the drivers is being sought through a survey (distributed) by April 2, 2019  Strategic Drivers are:   * Different Approaches to Serve our Students * Early Years * Hiring Staff to Support All Students * Indigenous Education * Modernization and Accessibility * Parent Engagement and Student Voice * Professional Development * Student Success   Feedback will be presented to the Finance, Budget and Enrolment (FBEC) Committee on 15 April; and  FBEC and Board will approve the final strategic drivers staff will use to develop the operating budget aligned to the MYSP.  Final budget approval at the FBEC meeting on 11 June 2019 and presented for Board approval on 19 June 2019.  The DRAFT version of the Special Education Budget and Craig Snider’s PowerPoint is appended to these minutes (Appendix C)   * <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Business-Services/Budgets-and-Financial-Statements/2019-20-Budget> |  |
| 7. | Memorandum: Hiring Practices and Class Size Engagements   * Class Size Engagement Guide * Ontario School Board Hiring Practices | Chair raised the question of why SEAC wasn’t consulted when School boards were asked by the Ministry  Trustee Brown commented on the discussions that took place around this request and no formal response has been made. |  |
| 8. | Leadership and Learning Department Staff updates and requests for SEAC input   * Action Plan updates * Autism Program announcement   (Staff Update is appended to Minutes – Appendix A) | News dominating headlines is the Autism announcement   * Schools are trying to find out which students are coming and who they are so that schools can make transitions easier, gather information and make decisions * Messaging to principals is that students who are eligible to be in school should be in school * Providing support to schools to support Principals – not a way for Principals to keep more students out of school * Schools are preparing for April 1st * Refusal to Admit Procedure is part of the Caring and Safe Schools Policy which is going through the consultation process |  |
| 9. | SEAC Handbook (January 2019) - update discussion | SEAC members were given binders with relevant documents.  They were asked to bring the binders to meetings each month or they can leave them with the SEAC Liaison and they will be brought to the meeting. |  |
| 10. | Trustees’ Report(s) | Nil |  |
| 11. | Working Group Updates:  Action Plans  Budget  Communications  Special Education Plan | No updates due to time constraints |  |
| 12. | SEAC Member Reports   * Announcements/Upcoming Events. | No updates due to time constraints |  |
| 13. | Other business   * Parents as Partners * Correspondence Received * Future Agenda Items * Membership Motions   (Membership Motion is appended to Minutes – Appendix B) | Request for volunteers at the Parents as Partners Conference   * Aline, Kirsten, Jordan and Richard * Changes/additions need to be made to the SEAC Board * Members are invited to submit up to date information about their associations for posting and distribution at the Conference. * A motion was passed unanimously to approve Cecilia Macintyre as the Alternate Member for Community Living Toronto. |  |
| 14. | Adjournment  Next Meeting: 1 April  2019 @ 7 pm |  |  |

Appendix A

Kathy Witherow, Associate Director and Brendan Browne, Executive Superintendent

Leadership, Learning, and School Improvement

SEAC Meeting of March 4th, 2019

**Government Announcement re: Autism Funding and Services**

The recent announcement has garnered significant attention throughout the province and in the media. While the announcement involves the direct funding for clinical services for children with autism through the Ministry of Children, Youth, and Community Services to families for such clinical intervention, the connection to schools is a consistent focus of attention.

The expressed intention of the government is to shift funding from school-aged children to pre-school aged children in order to prioritize early clinical intervention for students aged 4 or younger. Funding flows directly from the Ministry of Child, Youth, and Community Services to families with which they purchase a variety of services. The reality is the funding provided for school-aged children has been reduced dramatically, likely resulting in many families no longer being able to afford clinical services. We anticipate the result of this being more school aged children transitioning from being in a clinical setting for part of the day or week to being in school with us full time.

Essentially, under the previous plan, 25% of eligible children received 100% of the funding while 75% remained on a waitlist. In order to “eliminate the waitlist” the government has taken that entire funding and distributed amongst all eligible children/families. While the result is the perception of the elimination of a waitlist, the reality is that the funding is insufficient for any family over any length of time. As a result, school boards across the province anticipate more students coming to school full time who have been on modified days or weeks in therapy, or students who are school aged and not in school at all registering.

We are in the process of surveying schools in every Learning Centre, and have been working with Surrey Place to identify students who will be returning to TDSB or registering in TDSB as a result of this funding announcement. Though a small number of these students may be new to us because the student has been in full time therapy, the majority will be students who are known to us as they are with us at least part time.

As these students transition from one-to-one clinical intervention outside of school, to more time in the natural social environment that school provides their behaviour may be impacted. Consequently, we have to anticipate the potential impact on our human resources to respond with additional support. We will consider each student’s needs as we always do to determine the level of support required for a successful transition. Some students may be transitioning from a clinical setting in which they were receiving one-on-one intervention. Our role in education is not to attempt to replicate or make up for clinical services and we will have to work with students and families to determine the appropriate level of support programming, and transitions for students within our scope of practice in education.

While we cannot make up for the reduction or elimination of clinical services for students, we are committed to supporting students within our scope of practice in education. Our support for all students, particularly students with Autism, involve increased access to behavioural expertise, staffing, and to critical capacity building to support the effective use of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) strategies by our front line staff throughout the system. There is the likelihood that we will experience additional demands on these support services and staff will be supportive and creative in order to welcome all students and serve their needs within education.

**Refusal to Admit Procedure**

Thank you for your feedback and on-going conversations about this important procedure. As mentioned at the last SEAC meeting, TDSB is leading the province on this issue and is proud to do so in order to provide clarity, consistency, and transparency.

This procedure supports the larger “Safe and Caring Schools” policy which is currently out for public consultation. We appreciate the support from SEAC, and took the comments for improvement to heart as we continue to refine. Specifically, SEAC was clear about the importance of creating a ministry absence code to be able to clearly identify, record, and track any such practice. Staff are currently doing so practically to determine the best way to do so, and to communicate with the system. This will be included in the procedure. SEAC also wanted clarity around any situation in which a students’ day would be modified outside of a parental request, medical situation, etc. Staff is looking at how to do so to support SEAC’s request.

We see the work that we have been engaged in on this issue as being at the forefront of the province as other boards continue to look to our work as examples of what is possible. We continue to appreciate SEAC’s support as we work to create a procedure that provides clear guidelines and expectations for local leadership.

**Special Education Leadership Fair – March 20th**

We value school leaders who are committed to serving all students and encourage those who are seeking opportunities to make an larger system impact for students with special needs and their families. We are hosting a “Leadership Fair” on March 20th for staff within the system who are interested in exploring leadership in special education. We will be providing information and overviews on the role of Special Education Consultant, Coordinator, Centrally Assigned Principal, and support staff within the system. We want staff who are considering such leadership opportunities to have an understanding of what the role(s) involve, what can be expected, qualifications, and opportunities. We want to encourage the best and brightest educators to consider opportunities for leadership in TDSB and we consider this Leadership Fair as a way to spread the word about what we do and how to get involved.

**Home School Program (HSP) 2019/20**

As we continue to move the system toward inclusion, we do so by embracing the primary importance of the classroom teacher as having the greatest impact on student learning. While the Home School Program (HSP) was intended to keep students in their local schools, the result has been congregated placements within each school throughout the system. Our TDSB research indicates no discernable benefits for students in the program, and potentially limited opportunities for secondary and beyond. As a result, primary HSP was phased out this year, and this phase out continues into Gr. 4 in the 2019/20 academic year. Schools have been communicated this intention for next year and school organizations are considered accordingly. We will be maintaining the existing staffing at each site while we phase out HSP over time, and appreciate how some schools have utilized this staff in collaborative, co-teaching models that promote inclusion and support students’ needs locally.

**Staffing and Funding Announcements**

This SEAC report had to be amended on the 1st of March as a result of the government announcement in the evening on the February 28th. The government suggested the boards cease any staffing considerations and to not fill any existing vacancies until after March 15th at which time clarity for educational funding will be announced. We have been involved in staffing predictions and allocation up to this point as we would every year. This announcement is sending a clear message to the province that funding for education may not be at levels previously anticipated. This will significantly impact our budget conversations. Regardless, we appreciate SEAC’s direction and priorities when it comes to the spending of dollars allocated for Special Education and we will continue to engage with you through this process. Craig Snider will be at Monday’s meeting and will answer any questions you have about what we know, what we anticipate, and what it all means for Special Education. Of note, at a time when we will be expected to do more when it comes to the reduction of funding for families of students with Autism, we will be asked to do so with reduced funds. SEAC’s understanding, support, and advocacy is appreciated as we make such decisions in such circumstances.

**Staff Research and Presentation** – We are proud of our Autism Coordinator Lydia Tisma who represented TDSB by presenting at the 40th Ethnography in Education Research Forum – The Future of Ethnography and Education – Methodologies, Equity, and Ethics on February 22 and 23 in Philadelphia. “A Journey in Collaborative Inquiry: Special Education in Urban Toronto” described how staff worked collaboratively to negotiate the guidelines of an alternative curriculum for students with intellectual disabilities. This allowed staff to better understand practitioner research and collaborative inquiry in the context of supporting students with developmental disabilities. We embrace the opportunity to engage in research and share with the educational community about our work in TDSB.

**Appendix B**

MOTION: Community Living Toronto Association Alternative Representative Nomination

*Whereas there is a vacancy for Association Alternative Representative for Community Living Toronto on the Toronto District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), and*

*Whereas SEAC has received a nomination and recommendation from Brad Saunders, the CEO of Community Living Toronto for Cecilia MacIntyre to fill the role of Community Living Toronto Association Alternative Representative, and*

*Whereas she meets the Ministry of Education and board criteria for eligibility, therefore,*

*Be it resolved that the board appoint Cecilia MacIntyre as the Alternative Representative for Community Living Toronto, for the remainder of the current term (2018 – 2022).*

**Appendix C**

[**file:///C:/Users/dixon/Documents/Revised%20Draft%20Ward%20Forum%20Presentation%20FINAL.pdf**](file:///C:/Users/dixon/Documents/Revised%20Draft%20Ward%20Forum%20Presentation%20FINAL.pdf)

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Business-Services/Budgets-and-Financial-Statements/2019-20-Budget>