TDSB logo


Approved Minutes

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

**Meeting Date: March 20, 2023**

via Zoom and In-Person

Chair: Jean-Paul Ngana; Vice-Chair: Michelle Aarts

7:00 – 9:10 pm

Attendance:

A meeting of the Special Education Community Advisory Committee convened on March 20, 2023 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at 5050 Yonge Street, with Jean-Paul Ngana presiding.

Attendance: Jean Paul Ngana, (Chair), Trustee Michelle Aarts (Vice Chair), Trustee Liban Hassan, Melissa Rosen, Julie Diamond, Leo Lagnado, Richard Carter, Tracey O'Regan, Aline Chan, Aliza Chaqpar, Nora Green, Diane Montgomery, Guilia Barbuto, Dana Chapman,. Jordan Glass, Kirsten Doyle, Izabella Pruska-Oldenhof, Jana Girdauskas, Steven Lynette, Bronwen Alsop, David Lepofsky, Beth Dangerfield, Nerissa Hutchinson

Regrets: Trustee Zakir Patel, Trustee Liban Hassan, Saira Chhibber

Staff in Attendance:  Nandy Palmer, Audley Salmon, Wendy Terro, Effie Stathopoulos, Alison Board, Andrea Roach, Elizabeth Schaeffer, Katia Palumbo, Susan Moulton, Elizabeth Chalmers, Mun Shu Wong, Erin Pallett, Lianne Dixon

Regrets:

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| Item | Discussion | Action Items/Recommendation |
| Call to Order - Quorum | Chair  Announcement of Live Stream | Quorum achieved |
| Land Acknowledgement | The Chair asked for a volunteer to read the Land Acknowledgement | The Vice-Chair volunteered to read the Land Acknowledgement  Read |
| Approval of Agenda | The Chair asked Members if there were any new items to be added to the agenda. | On Motion by Nora Green, the agenda was approved.  Seconded by Richard Carter |
| Approval of Minutes from SEAC Meeting February 13, 2023 | Minutes were adjusted to include update from the Special Education Working Group, and an addendum of the power point presentation from Autism Presentation. | On Motion by Melissa Rosen, the Minutes of February 13 as amended were approved.  Seconded by Julie Diamond |
| Conflicts of interest | The Chair asked Members if there were any conflicts of interest to be declared | No Conflicts of Interest were declared |
| Action Log Update | Consider Special Education as a Budget Driver   * Budget drivers were approved at the board meeting before the March Break * The drivers are “high level” statements – special education is embedded in student success and well being. * Learning recovery fund has staffed 478 school based staff is also coming to an end (student success and special education staff) * There are key places for advocacy – Michelle Aarts will send links to SEAC members with details so they can advocate * Suggestion was made that SEAC needs to respond to the board does not consult effectively around the budget, and use the K-12 Standards Development Report as a blueprint | **Action Item:**  Discuss Special Education as a Budget Driver at a later meeting  **Action Item:**  Staff will share as much ONSIS data as is available as soon as possible. |
| Road Map Follow-Up | Follow up to Autism Presentation  “Celebrate the Spectrum” is the theme. Schools are encouraged to participate. Materials can be downloaded. Schools can register for fundraising program on the Celebrate the Spectrum Website.  Feedback from the presentation was shared around inclusion for autistic students, as well as feedback around the IPRC process.  TDSB created and shared a Parent Guide earlier this year. If parents need more time at an IPRC, it will be provided. A range of placement options is available in TDSB.  Professional learning is being provided to support staff as well as teachers and Administrators by the Central Autism Team.  **Down Syndrome Association of Toronto Presentation (Appendix A)**  Richard Carter, Association Representative from the Down Syndrome Association of Toronto, shared a power point presentation (attached) outlining:   * Diagnosis (genetic – three types) * Physical Characteristics of Down Syndrome * Health Concerns * Developmental Concerns * Causes and Risk Factors * Inclusion * Down Syndrome Association of Toronto details and members * World Down Syndrome Day (March 21) * Transition Guide   TDSB has been raising awareness for Down Syndrome Day as well as Autism and Epilepsy significant days through a newsletter to staff and Direct Line for all administrators.  **Working Group Updates**  **Budget** –– looking to find out how special education allocation is being used for. Question was raised about the carry over of the Impact of use of technology during Covid.  SEA claims are being processed and students in grades 5 and 9 received devices last year.  If 85 percent of budget is staffing, what is the other 15 percent used for? Each Principal is responsible for spending the special education budget and spends it on a variety of materials/resources for special education students.  The breakdown of cost for specific staff is in the Financial Facts, and will be shared by Michelle Aarts (distributed)  **Special Education Plan –** no update  **Effective Practices Working Group** – suggestion to follow the PAAC on SEAC calendar. Each month there are one or two items for staff to provide to SEAC.  **K-12 Standards Working Group** – school board has been asked to implement aspects of this report. New members are welcome and a meeting will be scheduled shortly. Suggestion was made that consideration be made for students up to age 21.  **ADHD Working Group** –  Meeting notes will be shared from second working group meeting. (distributed)  **Parents/caregivers as Partners Conference** – the application form to present sessions has been distributed.  **PIAC/SEAC Working Group** – in the process of being established  Members can sign up for any working groups. Please email liaison if you would like to join a group. | **Action Item:** Celebrate the Spectrum links to be shared with SEAC members, along with position statements from Autism Ontario. (Distributed after the meeting)  Integration Action for Inclusion presentation in April 2023  Community Living presentation in May 2023  .  **Action Item:** Further discussion on adopting the PAAC on SEAC calendar at future meeting. |
| Association Updates | Community Living will share information about Sibling workshops on March 25 (distributed)  Epilepsy Toronto – International Purple Day – contact Epilepsy Toronto for more information and lesson plans  March is Easter Seals month and information will be shared after the meeting (distributed) |  |
| Leadership Report | **Canadian Blind Hockey Learn To Skate Program:**  **Field Trip for Students with a Visual Impairment to Learn to Skate**    Canadian Blind Hockey, the national organization for the parasport of blind hockey, hosted TDSB students with a visual impairment at their practice rink on February 1, 2023. At the Scotiabank Pond, 27 students who identify as blind or partially sighted learned to skate and play blind hockey. This annual field trip and partnership with Canadian Blind Hockey has been ongoing for over 20 years and both staff and students were excited to get back on the ice.  **Update: Special Education Additional Qualifications Subsidy 2022-2023**  In December, we shared the professional learning opportunity for educators to received a subsidy for completion of a wide-range of Special Education Additional Qualification (AQ) courses in order to increase teacher knowledge and understanding of supporting students with special education needs. We are pleased to have allocated all of the funds provided by the Ministry for this initiative, resulting in 99 educators with additional qualifications in special education  **Equals Math Kits for Primary ASD ISPs**  Autism Services is pleased to announce an exciting new Professional Learning opportunity for Primary ASD ISP teachers. Equals Math Kits have been purchased for Primary ASD ISPs to support students developing strong math skills.  Equals math curriculum is a multi-sensory math program developed for students with mild to severe learning challenges. It is based on a foundation of essential math skills which students build upon to develop useful and functional math knowledge and understanding.  Teachers of ASD ISP classrooms will participate in four interactive virtual workshops for support in using this resource. Each session encourages participants to actively engage in learning through group tasks and provides opportunities to share and ask questions and ends with next steps to work on following the session.  **Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Webinar Sessions**  On Tuesday, February 28 and Wednesday, March 1 Special Education and Inclusion held evening webinar sessions entitled “An Introduction to Special Education and Inclusion in the TDSB for Parents/ Guardians/Caregivers and Families Part 2”. This session focused on supporting IPRC Reviews and Transitions and also provided an opportunity for parents/guardians/caregivers to ask questions about these processes. The sessions were facilitated by Special Education and Inclusion Centrally Assigned Principals and Coordinators and Consultants. The sessions had 127 attendees, who were provided the opportunity to ask questions while the presentations were being held. The recorded session can be accessed on the public website [here](https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Learning-Equity-and-Well-Being/Special-Education-and-Inclusion/Parent-Guides-to-Special-Education-and-Inclusion).  Concern was raised about use of acronyms with parents and whether the IEP review is still taking place that was started earlier this year. Professional learning is taking place around the IEP. |  |
| Trustees Report | Report will be shared electronically by Trustee Aarts (distributed)  Staff have presented the financial position to the board. One key piece of information that is missing is the Grants for Student Needs from the Ministry. It may not be received until mid-April. Trustees are taking a cautious approach.  Enrolment is being projected and schools can be given a base level of staffing so that Principals can start to plan.  Special Education staff allocation was deferred. As a board we spend 70 million dollars more on special education than the Ministry provides. The Special Education grant from the Ministry is a proportion of enrolment.  Question was raised about how teachers can be retained if positions are not confirmed due to lack of final budget. |  |
| Other Business  Adjournment  Correspondence  Next Meeting: April 11, 2023 | The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:05  Toronto Family Network sent an email about the posting of material on the website (response sent) | Motion to adjourn by Richard Carter, seconded by Nora Green. |

Appendix A

Down Syndrome Presentation (to be received from Richard)