# Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

MEETING NOTICE – Monday, June 18, 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 Tracey O’Regan

Down Syndrome Association of Toronto Richard Carter

Easter Seals Ontario Deborah Fletcher

Epilepsy Toronto Steven Lynette

Integrated Action for Inclusion (IAI) regrets

Learning Disabilities Association Toronto Myriam Rodriguez

VIEWS for the Visually Impaired David Lepofsky

VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children Paul Cross (Rosary Kwak)

TDSB North East Community Aline Chan Jean Paul Ngana Nelson Lui

TDSB North West Community Jordan Glass

TDSB South East Community Diane Montgomery Olga Ingrahm Dick Winters

TDSB South West Community Nora Green

TDSB Trustees Alexander Brown

Regrets: Margarita Isakov, Trustee Patel, Trustee Lulka

TDSB Staff Present:

Dr. John Malloy, Director of Education,

Robin Pilkey, Chair of the Board,

Uton Robinson, Executive Superintendent, Special Education and Section Programs,

Janine Small, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education,

Craig Snider, Executive Officer, Finance,

Marcela Mayo, Communications,

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 7:04 pm

1. Declaration of Possible Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

1. Special Education Update followed by an opportunity for questions and answers.

**Director John Malloy and Chair Robin Pilkey shared an updated copy of a letter written to SEAC Co-Chairs and SEAC Members (appendix A) dated June 18, 2018.**

Director Malloy made a presentation to SEAC. Key points are paraphrased below.

* Dr. Malloy thanked SEAC for the important role that it plays in advising on the effective delivery of special education services and programs
* Inclusion Under the Multi-Year Strategic Plan - the focus for students with special needs is to provide them with equity of access to learning opportunities. As always, the focus is on student achievement, well-being and equity as its foundation.
* We are focused on the creation of a more inclusive system of education at the TDSB that requires changes to some of the ways we are presently supporting students with special needs.
* We are also committed to providing the on-going professional learning our staff need to help our students with special needs achieve. This past year, all elementary schools were provided with an opportunity to release teachers so that they could engage in learning about UDL and DI with a focus on inclusiveness.
* In September, an Inclusion Learning Coach will be assigned to each of the Learning Centres. This coach will work closely with schools in the Learning Centre. The goal of the partnership is to create positive, inclusive learning environments by applying the strategies consistent with the Learning for All document.
* The Teaching and Learning department and the Special Education department will become one department called the Leadership and Learning department, which will support our commitment to inclusion.
* Many of the staff in our Leadership and Learning department will have special education expertise.
* The accountability for students with special needs will be at the Associate Director level, and all members of senior team will engage in professional learning to work effectively within this new model.
* This change to the executive organization is actually part of one of the motions passed by SEAC. Therefore, it aligns with SEAC’s thinking. We know that reorganizing a department alone cannot bring about the required changes; however, structure does matter when we are trying to change attitudes and practices.
* Our commitment to inclusion will ensure that we provide the most enabling environment for each student. As a Board, we have made a commitment to using Inclusive Design to inform how we approach the school improvement planning process
* Also, we are hiring three new staff members to support the Human Rights Office of the Board to more effectively address and resolve disputes through effective conflict resolution and mediation.
* Recently the Director read through all the motions that SEAC has passed and every insight that has been shared. He believes that although it may not always look like it, the board and staff are on the “same page” – there is synergy in what SEAC is asking, what the board is hearing and what the board is directing
* The next step is concrete action plans in the fall
* Shifting the focus so that all school superintendents need to take responsibility for all students – including those with special needs. All school superintendents have been learning together to that end
* Executive superintendents must take action when things start to go wrong.
* Parent protocol is not always being used in these cases
* Board is hiring three positions in the Human Rights Department to work with families – not only those with special needs
* All superintendents will be involved in supporting principals and special education experts will continue to support superintendents and principals
* If resolution is required, we will have the Human Rights department
* HSP is changing – primary is over and it will now only be grades 4 to 8.
* ISP’s – we need to study the impact of ISPs. There needs to be standards. We need to invite students and families not to be in ISPs – that will be seen in the plan in the fall
* We will always have ISPs – it is important to keep that in mind – we will support those programs, but the notion of promoting for those programs won’t happen –we will, however, meet the needs of those families
* The IPRC process can be cumbersome – that message has been heard
* Challenging the concept of streaming is the number one commitment from this board
* We have ways to go with accessibility – the Accessibility Coordinator will report through Human Rights to the Director
* Parent Concern Protocol needs to be used with special education students and families – we are working with PCP and ensuring that principals can use it effectively
* Parent voice has not always been heard and principals have been informed that they cannot say that they do not have a program for your child in the school – if it is being said, then superintendents will be involved.
* Many schools are not waiting – they are moving faster than he expected. If SEAC members have time, perhaps we can arrange to visit schools that are moving in the right direction
* The Director concluded by stating that he hopes that SEAC sees the structural change a response to what it had asked for in its various motions.

Chair Robin Pilkey made a presentation to SEAC. Key points are paraphrased below.

* At the last board meeting the board passed a multiyear strategic plan and special education was noted specifically as an area that needs a lot of work
* The board recognizes that this is an area where more work needs to be done. It concerns our most vulnerable students.
* The Director has shared how he is going to operationalize the multi year strategic plan and special education is one of key points
* Trustees are responsible for holding the Director accountable and they are committed to ensuring it happens
* She closed by stating that the board is going in the right direction towards meeting the needs of special education students and families

Questions/comments were addressed to Director Malloy and Chair Pilkey.

Q. Our Parent Survey reinforces how difficult it is for parent voice to be heard. We have asked for a new process to deal with this, but have been told we don’t need one because there is a parent concern protocol (PCP) that is in use, but now you are telling us that no one is really using it.

A. The Director acknowledged that our PCP hasn’t been used as it should. Superintendents often weren’t part of the process. Concerns went right from school to special education department and involved a lot of other people. The Director wants the superintendents involved and directly connected.

We want the PCP protocol used when there are issues with students with special needs and their families. When it can’t do what is required, then we will have expertise in each learning centre for support.

Q. Can we (SEAC) engage in refinement of PCP?

A. Yes – if there is a subcommittee that would like to work on PCP. Staff will be working on it during the summer.

Q. Can we get a full briefing on what has been done in the areas that SEAC has made recommendations?

A. There was discussion about finding another way to share information and communicate rather than just through SEAC meetings. The process needs to be refined. The multi-year strategic plan does include many of the suggestions/motions from SEAC. Next year there will be an associate director, an executive superintendent and a system superintendent responsible for all student learning.

Q. SEAC passed a motion for a review of special education, we received a letter advising us that the board has decided no. We were unaware that this was discussed and voted on at a board meeting.

A. (Chair Pilkey) SEAC reports through the PSSC and that report goes to all trustees. The motion was discussed at PSSC and was voted down. That information was then forwarded as part of the Consent Agenda to board at the following meeting and it was not lifted; the item was not raised again by anybody, and the item was not approved. Yes, it has gone to board. The board did not vote on it because it was part of the Consent Agenda. The PSSC agenda was approved. No Minority Report was brought forward by any trustee for it to be discussed and requesting a different result. Trustees have the opportunity to lift that item and chose not to.

Q. As Chair of the Board, we are asking that you reconsider that. We are entitled to an opportunity to be heard. Consistent with provincial regulations, we deserve a right to be heard before the board passes a decision. Will you allow us that chance?

A. (Chair Pilkey) At this point, the board has responded to the motion, they have chosen not to bring it forward. The reality is that the board holds the Director accountable and did not feel that having a review by a third party was necessary at this time. Through the multi-year plan, special education is an area that has been taken into account - many of your motions - and we have an obligation to hold the Director accountable for those actions. At this point, I feel that the board has responded to this motion. Not sure if anyone from SEAC came to speak to that motion.

(Director Malloy) I always take what SEAC says very seriously – It isn’t just that staff doesn’t like a review – but that due to the deep diversity of our board it would need a commission – not a review - we are managing significant diversities – to find the expert to do the review would have to pass the test of who our community would approve.

Q. How are we going to measure how we are doing?

A. (Director Malloy) Part of the commitment of the board for September is that the action plans will have clear metrics and timelines. We are going to engage in research on standards for our ISPs. What is happening in those programs? We need to use student census data and school climate data.

All superintendents are responsible for their 20 schools. They need to take complete ownership of their schools. Within the LC, there is one superintendent that liaises with the central department. The biggest shift now is that historically if a problem came up they would pass it on the special education department, now they are not allowed to just pass it on. The impact is that we have turned the corner on the notion of “we don’t have a program”. This model is predicated on a principal and staff connecting with parents. We are transforming how we do social work, psychology, physical, etc. They are being pulled into discussions in meaningful ways. We are trying to change culture, attitudes and beliefs.

Q. There is a concern that there will continue to be no accountability for principals and teachers. People need to understand that they cannot violate the human rights code.

A. The Director disagreed about the lack of accountability and reminded SEAC that the meeting is a public meeting and individual cases/concerns can’t be discussed.

Q. How do you ensure that every teacher believes in kids?

A. (Director Malloy) All schools are being supported to talk about who are students who are being underserved? What might we be doing to cause it? The focus has to be on what the staff is willing to confront.

Q. We agree that we all have to work together. This Committee has had three directors in ten years and half the trustees are gone. We have been trying to sort out what SEAC’s responsibilities are, what we can get to the board. We do want to be heard and we are entitled to be heard. Yes, we go through PSSC, but we are part of the solution and we do need to be respected.

A. (Chair Pilkey) The board recognizes that you are part of the solution. Otherwise we would not have forwarded all your motions to the Director for action or review. The board has taken your concerns seriously. We, as a board, have a strong governance role and to get operational items done we need to refer those to staff. From the board standpoint and hopefully your standpoint we are moving in the right direction. It needs action at this point. That is what we have asked the Director to do with his operational plans for the fall. These will be concrete actions with measurables.

Q.) Teachers, principals, support staff, all need to be on board and buy into this process. There needs to be focused training - CPI, for example. With all these changes and goals, how do the collective agreements inhibit (if they do) your ability to get better trained people in our schools or to improve the training of people in our schools.

A. (Director Malloy There is nothing in the collective agreements that blocks us from providing supports/training. We are not sure what resources we will be given in the new year for professional learning. The budget comes in April, but the government gives another amount in October and most of the Professional learning budget comes from that other amount. We have made a commitment to professional learning for students in specific programs. The action plan that has been brought to the board will ensure that learning is going hand in hand with our deep equity commitment. it is the number one issue in this transformation of learning that supports all students to achieve and most importantly our students with special needs. This is the number one commitment that I am making. The action plans will be concrete, they will be year one, year two, year three and they have to be realistic, but urgent and professional learning is top of the list. We have to provide time during the school day for much of our learning – that is why it is connected with the amount of money we get from the Ministry related to professional learning. We have engaged the unions and they have said they need more resources. Our work in equity is the number one expectation we have, it is to improve outcomes for kids. This is a path we have to stay on to get the change that you have requested.

Q. Despite good intentions, not all staff has the experience to respond to different exceptionalities with an appropriate response. They can’t provide all the answers.

A. (Director Malloy) The Superintendent is not a broker – they are not middle management – they are in charge. In the spirit of shared leadership, if I don’t have expertise in an area, within the LC there is expertise. There will no delegating elsewhere. The only delegating would be that if goes off the rails, there is an Executive Superintendent in each area that can intervene because of the fact in some cases we might need a special support. There will be three new positions to help us bring resolution to these cases. They will be part of a department that is more arm’s length, because they will part of an objective department. We have special education expertise and even if the superintendent needs to gain support from someone, they will held accountable.

Q. How does an advocacy group or SEAC communicate systemically.

A. (Director Malloy) The Executive Superintendent and Associate Director will determine who is going to do what when they get into their seats. I will be holding the new Associate Director responsible. If SEAC or an advocacy group needs to speak systemically, there will be someone to speak to. And that person reports directly to me.

Q. Representing gifted students, various ISP’s will remain for parents who want them. The wording around “complex needs” is still in the Special Education Plan. Some staff are still adhering to the wording.

A. (Director Malloy) We need to study the impact and effectiveness of ISP’s. We have also said we will not put roadblocks up to prevent parents accessing those programs through the IPRC process. The ISP’s are not ones we recruit for.

Q. Under the Ontario Disabilities Act (Accessibility for Ontarians) it says that the school board shall provide training and keep a record of when the training was provided. Can the board provide to us, the records showing the training that was provided, when it was provided and the number of individuals it was provided to?

A. (Director Malloy) Compliance training happens every September. There is a long list of compliance training. We provide the resources and walk staff through. Compliance however, does not necessarily bring about the change that we want to bring about. We can provide the data around compliance training. Staff have to sign off on it every year.

Q. Can we use this data to get funding and to ask for additional funding?

A. (Director Malloy) The board does have to leverage professional leaning opportunities. Also have to focus as to not pull staff in too many directions. We are working on helping principals work with their staff, their parent community and their students to figure out an appropriate focus for that school. Also, if you are trying to focus on more than three things, nothing is going happen. We have shone a light on a couple of things that need to happen. We are calling one “Challenging Streaming”. That language is starting to resonate in some rich discussions.

Q. The Director made reference to changing culture. Here is a suggestion in keeping with the spirt of a new era. Everything is about communication. At SEAC, we advise the board, to the political body not to staff. It would be helpful if the board, when receiving a motion from SEAC would advise Chair to Chair of the disposition of that motion. Could we have that line of communication?

A. (Chair Pilkey) Decisions of the board are publicly available and you have support staff on this committee who could be bringing that information back to the Chair. The information is publicly available.

Q. We shouldn’t be finding out information from the website. We send information to the board and the committee either sends it forward or doesn’t.

A. (Director Malloy) It is recorded in the minutes. At every meeting is a senior staff person and trustee. Those people can share information verbally with SEAC. It was suggested that SEAC gets a little more formal about what a staff report looks like. The number of motions can be overwhelming. From a staff perspective, it can be overwhelming to figure out how to do everything that SEAC wants. Director organized SEAC motions into 8 key themes.

Q. The number of motions reflected the depth of concerns. It was suggested to SEAC that they should make sure that someone is at PSSC from SEAC when motions are presented. The Chair is asking SEAC to spend time going on a website to check if our motions are passed. We go out of our way to state what our concerns are. It is reasonable to ask the board to do a better job of getting back to us. Telling us to go read the website is not very helpful.

A. (Chair Pilkey) The information is available. There are three trustees on this committee and staff. Your trustees can bring back information and share it.

A. (Director Malloy) What is being requested is more detail about what is being decided. From a staff perspective, our action plans will be public and communication regular and that communication to SEAC will be explicit.

Q. Will SEAC be consulted in Action Plan?

A. The Director will not be consulting further with SEAC around Action Plans. He stated that he has read all the input from SEAC from past years and suggested to SEAC members that if they have further input, they can send it to him without putting it forward as a motion. The board holds the Director accountable, however he can’t be constantly consulting. If you look at the documentation that has been sent, and there is something missing please send it to the Liaison to put together and submit.

SEAC Chair Richard Carter thanked the Director and Chair for spending time discussing and answering questions.

The Chair and Director thanked SEAC for the time and effort that they put in motions.

David Lepofsky suggested that a group be formed for working over the summer to provide input to the Action Plans – specifically to Parent Concern Protocol.

The SEAC Chair suggested that a working group around action plans be formed to look at them when they are released in order to provide time for the board to put these things in place. Suggestion was made to give input before the action plans are created and if the group comes up with any, they should go to the Liaison for submission.

A Motion to create an Action Plan Working Group was proposed by Chair Richard Carter. It was seconded by Jean Paul Ngana.

David Lepofsky volunteered to look into concerns specifically around the PCP.

 Membership in this working group includes:

* David Lepofsky
* Paula Boutis
* Richard Carter
* Melissa Rosen
* Deborah Fletcher
* Jean Paul Ngana
* Margarita Isakov
* Rosary Kwak
1. Approval of the Minutes for SEAC Meeting of Monday, May 5, 2018

A motion to approve the Minutes as circulated. Revised minutes are posted on the SEAC website.

1. Staff updates and requests for SEAC input
* Uton Robinson, Executive Superintendent, Special Education and Section Programs,
* Craig Snider, Executive Officer, Finance
* Marcela Mayo, Communications

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

**Budget**

Enhanced budgets were shared with SEAC by Craig Snider.

Several important announcements were recently made and acted on by staff.

**2018/19 Grant for Student Needs includes the following:**

2.9 million dollars was given for multidisciplinary teams. Staff allocated for September includes.

* 8 Speech and Language pathologists
* 4 Occupational/physical therapists
* 8 Child and Youth Counsellors
* 4 Inclusion coaches
* 4 Applied Behaviour Analysis facilitators

1.9 million dollars to support mental health workers in secondary schools

* Deploying 14.5 social workers to 29 secondary schools

Preparing for Success at High School

1.9 million to support grade 6/7/8 students in their transition to high school

* 42 student success counsellors along with guidance teachers – for total of 85 to help transition to high school

The EPO grant has not been announced. It is for addressing waiting list assessments, but it has not been divided and given out yet. Hopefully this will be announced in the fall.

Q. Are the ABA facilitators supporting students outside of Autism Spectrum?

A. Their focus would be on student on the autism spectrum. However, if there are students outside of the spectrum that need support, they could collaborate and support accordingly.

Q. New social workers in secondary school – are there any plans to support students with mental health issues in elementary school?

A. The funding was provided for secondary focus at this time.

New Special Education Website.

Marcela Mayo presented an overview of the refreshed website. She outlined the following:

* Five most visited pages (Help, IEP, Section 23, ISP, Assistive Technology) were highlighted and given particular focus
* The site will be accessible and interactive – it will have brochures, pictures, videos
* Easy to navigate
* Clear language for all parents
* Easy access to most visited pages
* Links for parents to SEAC website
* Also provides links for parents to access– ist/sst, iep, Section 23
* Can access website through early years, elementary school and secondary school

Suggestions were made as follows:

* Important for TDSB to exceed accessibility standards for their website
* Videos should have captioning and descriptive audio
* Should make it more situational/scenario based – i.e. I have a student who……
* Should have a place on the website that says “if you have a problem with…. Or ‘if your principal says they don’t have a program for you…. Click here
* SEAC requested Links to Education Act and Human Rights – and explicit explanation of what parents’ rights are
* Need to be able to explain to parents how and when to use PCP and what to do if it is not good enough

Executive Superintendent Robinson thanked SEAC members for their input and suggestions.

**Special Education Student Breakdown**

Dr. Rob Brown presented a breakdown of special education students by exceptionality. This breakdown was distributed with the agenda. Key points and question/answers are outlined below.

The largest increase is in the category of “student has an iep - regular class”. We have 80 percent of students in the province of students with no exceptionality in congregated classes – this has decreased by 236 students.

Q. If students have two exceptionalities – where are they counted?

A. You get counted once – special education (IPRC) decides which is the primary exceptionality. Approximately 12 percent of TDSB students have two exceptionalities. About 100 students have three exceptionalities.

Q. When we start to implement action plans - do we expect to see a decrease in this number? If no drop, why?

A. We anticipate with training in UDL, DI, and professional learning there should be a decline in number of IEP’s for students with no exceptionalities. There is still a view that if you don’t have the IEP you won’t be supported properly. Teachers should feel confident they don’t need to develop an IEP for these students with no exceptionalities. We meed to change teachers’ mindset. Professional learning is part of this process.

Q. When was the last time the board looked at race and exceptionality/placement?

1. This was done in 2011 after the last census. It is being done now that new census data is available. We should have it in the fall and it can be presented to SEAC.
2. How are we tracking students who placed in programs with different exceptionalities? Also, how do we track students with things that are not exceptionalities such as ADHD? How do we know who the students are who don’t have exceptionalities? Multiple exceptionalities are not well tracked in this board. In TDSB Multiple Exceptionality numbers are low.

A. Exceptionality numbers in TDSB are different than other places in the province. Multiple exceptionalities students have more than one concurrent exceptionality – in some areas and in other areas it is an exceptionality itself. Half boards do it and half don’t. Many of these questions could be a topic for further discussion.

**SPEEL**

Exec Supt Robinson shared a video created about students participating in SPEEL program that highlighted workplace partnerships.

1. Parents as Partners Conference Update and Motion – wording was changed from “workshop” to “workshop/plenary sessions”.

Motion was put forward with that amended, moved by Paula Boutis, seconded by Jordan Glass and the motion carried. (Appendix B)

1. SEAC Working Group Updates/Activities - no reports at this time
2. Association Reports/SEAC Community Representative Updates
	1. Annual SEAC report will be shared with all members before submitting.
3. Other Business Correspondence Received by SEAC – no correspondence to report
4. Adjournment/Next Meeting Date: Monday, September 10, 2018

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 pm.

Next meeting is June 18th, 2018 at 7:00 pm. This meeting will be held at the Cafeteria at 5050 Yonge Street.

Parking is at the same location

Appendix A: Letter to SEAC



 **Special Education Advisory Committee**

Toronto District School Board

5050 Yonge Street, 2nd Floor

Toronto, Ontario, M2N 5N8

June 18, 2018

Dear SEAC Co-Chairs and Members of the SEAC:

On behalf of the Toronto District School Board, we would like to thank you for the important role you play in advising on the effective delivery of Special Education services and programs for our students. Secondly, this letter is to update you on our work and to respectfully decline your request for an independent review of Special Education.

We respectfully decline your request because we will be moving forward with action plans – backed by research, expertise and the appropriate partners – to improve our Special Education model. We believe that this is the right step forward, and we are committed to working with our schools and communities to ensure our students with special needs are given equitable opportunities to achieve.

In addition to these plans, we want you to know that we have been actively listening and taking action to address the various concerns surrounding the Special Education model, including those raised by your committee and parents of children with special needs: inclusion, accessibility, information sharing, and effective processes, policies and programs. Below is an overview of this work.

**Inclusion**

Under the **Multi-Year Strategic Plan**, the focus for students with special needs is to provide them with equity of access to learning opportunities. As always, the focus is on student achievement, well-being and equity as its foundation.

We are focused on the creation of a more inclusive system of education at the TDSB that requires changes to some of the ways we are presently supporting students with special needs. We are also committed to providing the on-going professional learning our staff need to help our students with special needs achieve.

This past year, all elementary schools were provided with an opportunity to release teachers so that they could engage in learning about UDL and DI with a focus on inclusiveness.

In September, an Inclusion Learning Coach will be assigned to each of the Learning Centres.  This coach will work closely with schools in the Learning Centre.  They will partner with teachers of students with complex learning needs who are interested in engaging in a collaborative inquiry. These students may have special needs, such as Developmental Disability, Mild Intellectual Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Physical Disability or Multiple Disabilities. The goal of the partnership is to create positive, inclusive learning environments by applying the strategies consistent with the **Learning for All**document.

The Teaching and Learning department and the Special Education department will become one department called the Leadership and Learning department, which will support our commitment to inclusion. Having said this, many of the staff in our Leadership and Learning department will have special education expertise.

The accountability for students with special needs will be at the Associate Director level, and all members of senior team will engage in professional learning to work effectively within this new model.

This change to the executive organization is actually part of one of the motions passed by SEAC. Therefore, it aligns with SEAC’s thinking. We know that reorganizing a department alone cannot bring about the required changes; however, structure does matter when we are trying to change attitudes and practices.

Our commitment to inclusion will ensure that we provide the most enabling environment for each student. As a Board, we have made a commitment to using Inclusive Design to inform how we approach the school improvement planning process. This requires us to begin with students’ identities, abilities and lived experiences. Inclusive Design incorporates explicitly Universal Design for Learning and differentiated learning approaches to support all students in classrooms.

This is the direction for the school improvement process in all schools, at all grade levels and in all subject areas. All principals have received initial learning about this and we will continue to engage the system in this learning.

This means that many students will learn in their community school with appropriate supports, while some students will continue to be served in intensive support programs and in congregated school sites. As always, we will ensure that all of our programs and services provide students with the most enabling learning environments.

Every commitment we have made, and every outcome we expect, relies on our ability to start with our students’ strengths, gifts, interests, identities, abilities and needs. Our commitment includes creating learning opportunities that incorporate student choice and promote student ownership for their learning as they engage in inquiry that is connected to social justice issues and local, national and global challenges to be solved.

**Accessibility**

Plans are underway to make all schools, including new builds and additions, more accessible – both physically and digitally – for our students, parents and communities.

We are providing technology to meet the educational needs of students, including support equipment for hearing, vision, personal care and physical care for all students who require them. Centrally, we collaborate with schools, administrators, teachers and students to integrate assistive technology as an effective teaching and learning tool in the classroom, and build capacity among in-school staff to share excellent practices.

We are committed to taking steps that will enable all of our students and parents with access to the digital equipment and technology needed for learning. We are also committed to on-going professional learning throughout the year. This can include sessions on assistive technology, including Ministry licensed software (for students, parents and staff), online web casts, online mentoring through conferences, online videos for staff, parents and students. These resources support our culture of high expectation and student voice that promote student outcomes.

**Information Sharing**

We continue to provide a variety of avenues to share information and communicate with our students, staff and parents, using both print and digital materials. This includes school and corporate newsletters, promotional and creative materials for programs, supports and events, web stories, interactive web casts, parent conferences and more.

We have sought SEAC’s input and have refreshed the Special Education website and revised a number of information brochures that parents will use to better understand Special Education processes. These revised brochures will be placed in the **Special Education Plan** and will be reviewed annually.

As we continue to centre student voice and agency, we also pay close attention to the positive relationships that must exist among educators, students and their parents in order for students to be successful.

**Effective Processes, Polices and Programs**

We continue to review documents pertaining to students with special needs, such as: PR699, Refusal to Admit, Parent Concern Protocol, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Differentiated Learning (DI) and Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) strategies.

We will explicitly identify the IEP consultation process and then, should disagreement arise, we will use the Parent Concern Protocol up to the level of the involvement of the Superintendent of Education always focusing on the student and looking to establish and maintain respectful relationships.

Also, we are hiring three new staff members to support the Human Rights Office of the Board to more effectively address and resolve disputes through effective conflict resolution and mediation.

From a parent perspective, we understand that it is important that our processes are easy to understand and navigate, and that they lead to resolution.

With effective processes, policies and programs, we will continue to remove barriers for participation and provide further opportunities for resources to be closer to local schools through more frequent interactions between coordinators, consultants, teachers, principals and the superintendents.

We understand that there is more work to do and we are committed to that work.

We have the research, expertise and appropriate partners to support moving forward with positive changes to the Special Education model. In addition to our own research department, we are partnering with various agencies like Geneva Centre Foundation, Rick Hansen Foundation, Holland Bloorview Rehabilitation Hospital and The Hospital for Sick Children.

This work will be embedded in and align with the **Multi-Year Strategic Plan** and the **Integrated Equity Framework.** It will help transform student learning, create a culture for student and staff well-being, provide equity of access to learning opportunities for all students, allocate human and financial resources strategically to support student needs, and build strong relationships and partnerships within school communities for student learning and well-being.

If you have any questions, concerns or recommendations regarding the Special Education model or our decision to decline the independent review, we will be available at the **Special Education Advisory Committee** meeting on **Monday, June 18**.

Sincerely,

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Robin Pilkey                                                                              John Malloy
Chair of the Board                                                                   Director of Education

Appendix B: Parents as Partners Conference (June 2018) P. Boutis

**MOTION**

To ensure that parents are genuinely involved in the development of the conference workshops/plenary sessions from SEAC’s PRO Grant, the organizing committee will ensure that both SEAC representatives and staff are welcome to propose topics and participate in the workshops/plenary sessions for the Parents as Partners Conference.

SEAC representatives to the committee shall be active participants in the determination of workshops/plenary sessions and ensure that SEAC is informed of proposed topics by staff early in the planning stages and be given an opportunity to comment on those as well as to suggest their own workshops/plenary sessions. Representatives of SEAC will be welcome to offer workshops/plenary sessions, along with other parents who may be identified to provide relevant workshops/plenary sessions to parents.

SEAC also proposes that the TDSB organizing committee create a separate smaller working group for the development of workshops to most effectively use the time of volunteers who assist in the conference.