**Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)**

## MINUTES for Monday May 2, 2016 – DRAFT

### SEAC – Representatives and (Alternates) Present:

Association for Bright Children Diana Avon

Autism Society of Ontario – Toronto Lisa Kness

Brain Injury Society of Toronto Cynthia Sprigings

Community Living Toronto *regrets*

Down Syndrome Association of Toronto Richard Carter

Easter Seals Ontario *regrets*

Epilepsy Toronto Steven Lynette

Learning Disabilities Association Toronto *regrets*

VIEWS for the Visually Impaired David Lepofsky

VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children Paul Cross

TDSB North East Community *regrets*

TDSB North West Community Jordan Glass Phillip Sargent

TDSB South East Community Diane Montgomery Olga Ingrahm

TDSB South West Community Nora Green Paula Boutis (Colin Ballosingh)

TDSB Trustees Pamela Gough Alexander Brown

Regrets: Community Living Rep Clovis Grant and Alternate Margarita Isakov, Easter Seals Rep Deborah Fletcher, Learning Disabilities Rep Mark Kovats, NE Community Reps Aline Chan and Jean-Paul Ngana and NE Alternate Dick Winters

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

Ian Allison, Coordinating Superintendent, Special Education and Section Programs

Dr. John Malloy, TDSB Director of Education

Dr. Carolyn Lennox, Chief of Psychological Services, Area B

Dr. David Schwartzbein, Chief of Psychological Services, Area D

Peter Singh, Chief Technology Officer

Recorder: Margo Ratsep, SEAC Liaison

MINUTES

## Call to Order

## SEAC Chair David Lepofsky called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and invited SEAC members and staff in attendance to introduce themselves to the guests in the gallery.

## Declaration of Possible Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were noted.

## Moment of Silence in memory of Trustee Howard Kaplan

The Chair expressed appreciation for the work of Trustee Howard Kaplan. He reported that he and SEAC Vice Chair Brown had attended the shiva and extended condolences to Trustee Kaplan’s family on behalf of SEAC. Members took part in a moment of silence in recognition of the important contributions made by Trustee Kaplan to the board and as a committed representative on SEAC.

The Chair welcomed TDSB Director, John Malloy and invited him to address SEAC.

Director Malloy expressed his personal commitment to understanding the issues and bringing parties together to address them. He recognizes TDSB has important work to do together with SEAC – work on which the TDSB senior team has already been focusing. He stressed that because of the complexities involved, TDSB needs to make sure that students continue to be well served as changes are being made. He noted emerging themes:

* The system is difficult to navigate and TDSB needs to communicate more effectively (I.e. how it communicates what it offers, who it consults, who makes the decisions, etc.). A lack of clarity has led to frustration, anger and exhaustion on the parts of parents, communities and staff. The danger is that this frustration can lead to discussion that becomes less helpful and does not allow staff to focus on improving service to students based on thoughtful analysis and careful decision-making.
* When parents, staff and students are frustrated, the board knows something has to shift. The board is committed to and concerned about providing direction to staff in terms of learning for all students and effective interventions for all students who need them.
* The Special Education Plan isn’t always delivered on to the extent expected. Time is needed to sort out what needs to be done to improve the Plan. In the midst of the concerns and challenges, TDSB needs to see not only what is and what isn’t working, but why – and then proceed intentionally.
* There is a deep desire among staff, communities and families to serve students. Recognizing the positive intentionality of parents, staff and SEAC, as the board moves forward staff need to carefully identify what needs to be focused on to make the greatest change possible. We need to sort out what the most important things are that should be on the table.
* There is concern within our communities that voices are not being heard and frustration with a lack of responsiveness by the board. The emerging Learning Centre strategy is meant to be a more engaging and responsive structure, ensuring that decision-making is closer to schools. There will be opportunities for broader consultation on how well we are doing, as we implement a more responsive and engaging structure.

Dr. Malloy expressed his own excitement and optimism about the meaningful work of the board and staff in improving how well TDSB serves its students. Insights and ideas from SEAC member communities are welcome regarding what TDSB is offering, how it is being provided and how well TDSB is doing.

Dr. Malloy is also asking for patience – that TDSB and SEAC work together, with patience to figure out key next steps. He is concerned about the difficulty of being successful together if there are too many things on the table competing for finite time and finite resources. Clarity of focus is required and some space to do collaborative work with the ideas generated. He assured SEAC that the board is committed to improvement and to assessing how engaging and responsive the on-going work is and how effective its impact is on students.

David Lepofsky thanked Dr. Malloy and described the draft SEAC motions being considered at this meeting as a way of providing that focus for SEAC’s ideas.

## Confirmation of Minutes for the March 7, 2016 SEAC meeting

On motion of Paul Cross, the Minutes of the Tuesday April 5, 2016 SEAC meeting were approved.

The Chair reminded SEAC members of the need to make a recommendation to the board for the appointment of the BIST representative.

**\*\*\*MOTION**  On motion of Vice Chair Alexander Brown:

**Whereas Michelle McDonald, the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Representative for the Brain Injury Society of Toronto (BIST) has resigned, and the Executive Director for BIST has recommended current BIST Alternate, Cynthia Sprigings as her replacement, therefore,**

**SEAC recommends that the Toronto District School Board appoint Cynthia Sprigings as BIST Representative on the TDSB Special Education Advisory Committee for the 2015 to 2018 term.**

The motion carried.

## Digital and Information Technology Accessibility at TDSB (Peter Singh, TDSB Chief Technology Officer) – relates to Priority 3 (Ensuring a Barrier Free school board

David Lepofsky expressed appreciation to staff for responding to the request for more information on Accessibility of Technology for students with diverse disabilities, as well as for staff and parents with disabilities such as vision loss. Executive Superintendent Uton Robinson explained that the 5 questions addressed in the provided information were questions that were taken from the report provided to the Program and School Services Committee (PSSC). He thanked Peter Singh, TDSB Chief Technology Officer for attending to respond to SEAC member questions.

Mr. Singh thanked SEAC for inviting him to the meeting and spoke to the Question and Answer document that had been distributed in advance to SEAC members. During the discussion and follow-up questions on the topic, the following points were made:

* Work around AODA is being looked after by various teams within the TDSB, including Information Technology, Information Services, Web Team, Board legal services, Teaching and Learning and Special Education.
* When procuring anything, TDSB must ensure that any pieces touching students directly are AODA compliant.
* TDSB’s virtual library has on-line resources that are accessible.
* There is agreement about the need to “crowd source” information sharing. Rather than focusing on Teacher to student, the sharing should happen with whoever has the knowledge, including peer-to-peer. The goal is to create a system where can we facilitate those relationships.
* The new technology is transformative – all companies are focusing on within classroom apps that help kids. TDSB is looking for built in features that can be utilized in all grades.
* The board has 25,000 iPads. The majority are TDSB-funded but some have been purchased through school-based fundraising. TDSB is addressing equity by placing central money for hardware directly into school budgets.
* TDSB has facilitated technology discussion by staff with a guidebook and catalogue for procurement, so schools don’t go outside the board contract. School staff and administrators are guided to ask what the right technology is for what the school wants to do, before making purchases.
* There is agreement with comments on procurement and staff is currently looking for direction from the board on how to proceed.
* There is agreement that just having the devices isn’t enough – There is a need for more Professional Development for staff to ensure their use.
* TDSB has the ability to carry out one or 100 down loads of apps for students to use. App distribution is complex and made more complicated when suppliers like Apple change their app strategy, requiring a wait for the next transformation.
* School-based staff are also being assisted in the management of iPads in school labs through the introduction of the ability to make changes to all computers in a lab in a faster, more efficient way.

**SEAC Input**

* **We have an opportunity to integrate accessible technology into student devices, so all students can become a resource for other students.**
* **It is important that TDSB address equity issues to ensure all schools have access to new technology and not just those that can fundraise.**
* **It is important to have the technology available, but equally important for everyone to know how to use it and to have teacher and peer acceptance and support for actually using it in the classroom. Do not underestimate the capability of students with special needs to reach outcomes with appropriately applied assistive technology.**
* **Peer support needs to be reinforced with front-line staff so kids in regular classes are supported by peers too. For example, students provided with Special Education Amount (SEA) claim equipment won’t use it without peer acceptance and/or support and greater staff acceptance and understanding of how it can be used to support a student.**
* **The issue is not just AODA compliance because those requirements are not as specific as they should be. Human Rights Code also applies and covers more.**
* **It is not enough to talk about adaptive products – what is important is to ensure the board chooses technology that is useable by all or has features that can be adaptive. The products listed in the Q & A are add-ons that try to work around but don’t accommodate every barrier. Before we even deploy a device in the classroom the question is, if there are 2 options have we chosen the best one, based on Principles of Universal Design for Learning.**
* **With 25000 iPads, we already have technology based on Universal Design – useful technology we already have but which is not being used to its fullest extent.**
* **Regarding procurement – a customer the size of TDSB has influence. There is room for SEAC’s digital accessibility motion to contribute to the helpful information provided.**
* **The TDSB website is not where it needs to be in terms of accessibility. We need a process for producing accessible online content.**
* **TDSB needs ways to share applications across the board among staff.**

Actions:

Peter Singh undertook to work with Uton Robinson to facilitate sharing the following information with SEAC:

1. Whether the board’s Virtual Library contains e-copies that are accessible to the student by e-reading software. *(This information has been sourced and added on page 13 – 14 of these Minutes.)*

2. What the distribution of iPads is across the system.

David Lepofsky thanked Mr. Singh for his time and requested that the Q and A on Accessibility document be posted on the SEAC pages of the TDSB website.

**6. Follow-Up on Giftedness Screening**

Coordinating Superintendent Ian Allison spoke briefly to the Q & A document about the new Universal Screening process, which he had provided to SEAC in advance of the meeting. He invited questions on that document and about the second document, a report he had forwarded for SEAC’s attention, as was required by PSSC.

In response to questions about the Universal Screening process, Dr. Carolyn Lennox shared the following information:

* Staff spoke with other boards before approaching the publishing company for the CCAT.
* The assessment will be presented to parents as a universal screener for all grade 3 students. While it is not just for Gifted, it will be part of the process for bringing forward any child for Giftedness consideration. The assessment is also valuable because it provides teachers information that is useful for programming purposes. Parents must provide signed, informed consent before the assessment can be given.
* Staff did ask questions about accessibility and learned that accommodations will be able to address the accessibility challenges in most instances, and without impacting on the accurate measure of results.
* As with most kinds of assessment, the CCAT is not for everyone. There will be children it will not fit. In those instances, there needs to be a discussion by the School Support Team (SST) regarding the fairness of the procedure. That is one of the purposes of the SST process.
* Procedures to address staff and parental concerns about possible special needs are already in place through the School Support Team (SST) process. Results from the universal screener that indicate possible exceptional needs (not just for Giftedness) will be taken to the SST for a decision about the need to proceed to an Individual assessment. The Gifted Rating Scale (GRS) is an intermediate step. The SST must still discuss what the next step will be. The SST process includes parents.
* A technical Manual is provided describing administration and accommodations. There needs to be discussion with the School Support Team prior to testing to know what accommodation strategies are needed, or if it is even the appropriate tool to use. In some cases, it may be advisable to go directly to individual assessment.
* The resources that are required by the child (such as someone for scribing) are provided at the school, (as they commonly are for EQAO).

**SEAC input:**

* **This assessment is being presented as a universal screening tool for many kinds of information, while also being used in the Gifted Screening process. The concern is how effective it is in a real sense as a universal screening tool for other exceptionalities apart from Giftedness.**
* **The details given in the Q & A provide follow-up steps for further screening for Giftedness, but not for other special learner populations. TDSB needs to outline procedures and follow-up steps for the students who are potentially impacted by other kinds of exceptionalities. For example, for the student exhibiting a possible Learning Disability, parents won’t know what Steps 2, 3 and 4 will be. If next steps are not spelled out and the parent doesn’t know to ask, there is a potential for it to go unnoticed.**
* **There needs to be proactive outreach to parents about the results of the universal screening.**
* **The CCAT and alternative testing strategies/accommodations make sense. These strategies should be common practice even beyond this assessment.**
* **The Association for Bright Children would appreciate having input into the Teacher questionnaire, since Teachers sometimes confuse high achievers and Giftedness.**
* **The Manual has accommodations for students. It is imperative to offer students any of the accommodations they require.**
* **A suggestion was made that the board relook at the Grade 3 limitation for Gifted assessment and programming.**
* **David Lepofsky volunteered to connect with a resource person he knows who could assist in making sure a test is accessible.**

Additional questions were put forward as not covered in the distributed Q & A document:

* On the website, parents can see what the criteria are for Giftedness identification and have a sense of what the process is. If the universal screening reveals a spread of discrepant scores, where can parents find out what the next steps are?
* What happens if a child has had an earlier psychological assessment that suggests giftedness, but is screened out as the result of the GRS? A testing situation may also be impacted by behaviour and result in a discrepancy. What is the appeal process and how would discrepancies be resolved?

The second document was not addressed at this time by SEAC.

The Chair requested that the distributed Q & A document be posted on the website. Uton Robinson clarified that this was an opportunity for SEAC to provide input into the document. Mr. Robinson indicated he will be refining the document in light of SEAC’s input and will be sharing it with system principals before it is posted on the TDSB website.

**7. Four Motions on TDSB Special Education Reform**

Chair David Lepofsky spoke to the motions he had drafted and outlined the next steps:

* Trustee Brown would take members through the motions one by one at the meeting, to identify the concerns held in common and those that might be more contentious among members.
* Discussion would take into account newly shared ideas and any reservations, in order to clarify and refine the motions.
* At the June meeting, SEAC may be in a position to make decisions on some of the motions.

At 8:59 the Chair obtained consensus to extend meeting. Trustee Alexander proceeded to review the motions with SEAC. Input to the four motions was collected. (See additions in red, on pages 7–12.)

SEAC Liaison, Margo Ratsep undertook to collect and collate any additional member input emailed to her for inclusion in the motions.

## 8. TDSB Petition

## This item was tabled until the June meeting.

## 9. Other Business

No new business was raised.

## 10. Adjournment

## On motion of Steven Lynette and a majority vote in favour, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Next Meeting: **June 13, 2016 (New date)**

**Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) – TDSB Special Education Reform Draft Motions**

# Motion #1 – Draft 1 (April 20, 2016)

## The Right of Parents, Guardians and Students with Special Education Needs to Know about TDSB Special Education Programs, Services, and Supports, and How to Access Them

SEAC recommends as follows:

1. *[TDSB needs to develop information resources.]* TDSB should ensure that parents, guardians, and where practicable, students are ~~told~~ *informed*, as soon as possible, in a readily-accessible and understandable way, about such important information as:

a) What is “special education” and who is entitled to receive it.

b) TDSB’s duty to ensure that the *special* education~~al~~ needs of students with disabilities are effectively accommodated, as required by the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Charter of Rights. *[*We *need to understand what the Code and Charter refer to when talking about duty to accommodate and what TDSB means.* *There is an opportunity to establish what the requirement is and to convince front line workers that it is what they both need and want to do – a paradigm shift for the board]*

c) The range of options, placements, programs, services, supports and accommodations available at TDSB for students with special education needs.

d) What persons and what office to approach at TDSB to get this information, to request placements, programs, supports, services or accommodations for students with special education needs, or to raise concerns about whether TDSB is effectively meeting the student’s education needs.

e) The processes and procedures at TDSB for a parent, guardian or student to request or change placements, programs, services, supports or accommodations for students with special education needs. This includes formal legislated processes like the Identification and Placement Review Committee (IPRC) and the development and implementation of the students Individual Education Plan (IEP) It also includes other informal processes like requests for programs, services, supports and accommodations in the classroom that are not covered in an IPRC or IEP.

2. Without restricting the important information that must be made readily available, TDSB should ensure, among other things, that:

a) parents and guardians of students with special education needs can easily find out and, where necessary, visit different placement, program, service and support options for a student with special education needs, before the parent, guardian or, where practicable, the student must take a position on what placement, program or services should be provided to that student.

b) parents and guardians of students with special education needs and, where practicable, students with special education needs themselves, should be given clear, understandable explanations of their rights in the special education process. For example, when TDSB presents parents or guardians with a proposed IEP, TDSB should carefully explain to them that they need not agree to the proposed IEP, that TDSB is open to their suggestions for changes to the proposed IEP, and the avenues by which parents or guardians can seek to get TDSB to make changes to the proposed IEP.

3. TDSB should now implement a comprehensive plan to substantially improve its provision of the important information, described above, to all parents and guardians of TDSB students, and to all TDSB students where practicable, and especially to parents and guardians of students with special education needs:

*[Every parent should have an option to receive information digitally or in hard copy – to be able to opt in or opt out.]*

a) This plan’s objective should be to ensure that all parents, guardians and where practicable, students, have the important information they need to ensure that students of all abilities can fully access and benefit from the educational opportunities available at TDSB.

b) TDSB should not simply leave it to each principal or teacher to make sure that this important information is effectively provided. *[Reword this as a positive statement.]*

c) TDSB should ensure that all of this important information is fully and readily accessible in a prompt and timely way to all parents, guardians and students, in accessible formats and, in jargon-free plain language, in a diverse range of languages. It should be easy to find this information, without having to call all around TDSB.

d) TDSB should not simply rely on its website to share this information since this will not serve those families that do not have internet access. *[Reword this as a positive statement.]*

e) This plan should include TDSB sending home information at the start of each school year in a package of information to all families, and not merely families of those students who are already being served as having special education needs. *[If sending a package home, send home questions to prompt parents – i.e. here’s something to think about…The advantage of sending it to all parents, helps get families of kids without special needs to be more understanding of those who do struggle – improves inclusion.]*

f) This plan should include the creation of a user-friendly package of information to be provided to families who first approach TDSB about the possibility of enrolling a child at TDSB, e.g. when they register for kindergarten.

**Motion #2 – Draft 1 (April 20, 2016)**

## Ensuring that Parents, Guardians and Students Have a Fair *[and Effective]* Process for Raising Concerns about TDSB’s Accommodation of the Education Needs of Students with Special Education Needs

SEAC recommends as follows:

1. TDSB should establish *[an improved]* ~~new~~ process for parents and guardians of students with special education needs to more effectively take part in the development and implementation of a student’s Individual Education Plan. This should include giving parents complete, timely and readily-understandable information about the IEP development process, and the parents/ guardians’ rights and opportunities in that process (in accordance with Motion #1 – Parents/Guardians Right to Know). *[Have a condensed version of the Plan i.e. regarding exceptionalities, IEP, etc. – What does an MID child typically have in an IEP – would like a manual.]*

2. Parents and guardians of students with special education needs, and where practicable, the student, should be invited to take part in a joint TDSB IEP development meeting, where the IEP will be written. TDSB should bring to the table all key professionals who can contribute to this. The family should be invited to bring to the table any supports and professionals that can assist the family.

*[Suggestions:*

* *Need to develop support for students, such as every student having access to homework assignments on-line.*
* *Parents need support to participate effectively – more information about what a good IEP looks like. Need for clarification about what the IEP is.*
* *There are parents who might want an alternative way to participate – need to provide a wide range of options in how they want to participate.*
* *Useful to have a list of personnel from staff that will show up so not intimidating for parents. Family should be notified about who the supports are.*
* *Need TDSB sponsored events specific to these things – through school councils and in every school so parents can learn about this.*
* *Groups represented on SEAC have expertise to offer parents and can provide through their own organizations, advice on what to ask for, how to ask, to know what accommodations are possible – so there is no mystery about what to ask for]*

3. If TDSB refuses to provide an accommodation, service, or support for a child’s disability that a parent, guardian, or where appropriate, the student requests, TDSB should, on request, promptly provide written reasons for that refusal.

4. If parents and guardians of students with special education needs, and where practicable, the student, disagree with any aspect of the proposed IEP, TDSB should make available an internal appeal process for hearing and deciding on the family’s concerns. This internal TDSB appeal process should meet the following requirements:

a) It should be very prompt. An IEP should be finalized as quickly as possible, so that the students’ learning needs are promptly met.

b) No proposed accommodations should be withheld from a student pending an appeal. The family should not feel pressured not to appeal, lest the child be placed in a position of educational disadvantage during the appeal process. *[Needs clarity – to explain that those accommodations proposed by the school will not be withheld pending an appeal.]*

c) The appeal process should be fair. TDSB should let the family know all of its issues or concerns with a family’s proposal regarding the IEP. The family should be given a fair chance to express its concerns and recommendations regarding the IEP.

d) The appeal should be to a person or persons who are independent and impartial. They should have expertise in special education. They should not have taken part in any of the earlier discussions or decisions regarding the IEP for that child.

e) At the appeal, every effort should be made to mediate and resolve any disagreements between the family and TDSB. If the matter cannot be resolved by agreement, there should be an option for TDSB to appoint a person or persons who are outside TDSB to consider the appeal, along short time lines.

f) At the appeal, written reasons should be given for the decision, and especially if any of the family’s requests or concerns are not accepted.

g) If, after receiving the appeal reasons, the family wishes to present any new information, it can ask for the appeal to be reconsidered. This should be along short time lines.

h) After the Appeal is decided, if the family is not satisfied, it should be able to bring its concerns regarding the proposed IEP to the Executive Superintendent for Special Education, for a further consideration.

5. TDSB should establish a process for parents and guardians of students with special education needs and where practicable, the student, where they can raise concerns about the implementation of the IEP. For example, this should be available if there is a concern that the IEP is not being fully implemented. These should follow the same procedures as listed above for family concerns regarding the content of the IEP.

6. Once an IEP is established, TDSB should put in place a process for monitoring or periodically checking on a random basis to see to what extent IEPs are being effectively implemented. A synthesis or summary of the results of this audit or monitoring should be shared with the Special Education Advisory Committee and the TDSB trustees, with any identification of students removed.

*[During the discussion, reference was made to the differences between IEPs in elementary and secondary, particularly around resources and parent involvement. Executive Superintendent Robinson noted that while the quality of the experience should be the same for parents with regards to involvement, opportunities to interact with teachers, etc., there are differences resulting from the numbers of students and teacher mindset (related to subject specialization) in secondary schools. IEPs are generally different in terms of complexity.]*

**Motion #3 – Draft 1 (April 20, 2016)**

**Ensuring a Fully Accessible Built Environment at TDSB Schools**

SEAC recommends as follows:

1. TDSB should develop a plan for ensuring that the built environment of its schools and other educational facilities becomes fully accessible to people with disabilities as soon as reasonably possible, and in any event, no later than 2025. *[The focus is to do as much as can within available funding.]* As part of this planning process:

a) As a first step, TDSB should develop a plan for making as many of its schools disability-accessible within its current financial context. *[Make a site as fully accessible as possible through school-based organizational decisions.]*

b) TDSB should identify which schools can be more easily made accessible, and which schools would require substantially more extensive action to be made physically accessible. An interim plan should be developed to show what progress towards full physical accessibility can be made by first addressing those schools that would require less money to be made physically accessible. *[Need to look across the system to address geographic equity of access – not just the ones that are easy to fix, but which neighbourhood has not been addressed. Don’t rely solely on the easy fixes without the other considerations. Think about sensory, vision and hearing needs too.]*

2. If the Ontario Government does not have a detailed and sufficient accessibility standard for the design of the built environment in schools, TDSB should develop an up-to-date list of design criteria for ensuring the physical accessibility of any new construction or renovation, especially at a school. This should meet the accessibility requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Charter of Rights. It should meet the needs of all disabilities, and not only those of people with mobility disabilities.

3. When TDSB seeks to retain outside design professionals, such as architects, for the design of a new school or a school renovation, or for any other TDSB construction project, TDSB should include in any Request for Proposal (RFP) a strong condition that the design professional must have sufficient expertise in accessibility design. *[Think about sensory, vision and hearing needs too.]*

4. TDSB trustees and SEAC should review design decisions on new construction or renovations to ensure that physical accessibility is effectively addressed.

5. TDSB should look for funding to reallocate to accessibility retrofits, where possible, from within its budget. When doing this, TDSB should recognize that fulfilling its duties under the Charter of Rights and the Ontario Human Rights Code is an important budgetary priority. *[Think about sensory, vision and hearing needs too.]*

6. Where possible, TDSB should avoid throwing good money after bad, i.e. by renovating an existing school that lacks disability accessibility, unless TDSB has a plan to also make that school accessible. For example, TDSB should not spend public money to renovate the second storey of a school which lacks accessibility to the second storey, if TDSB does not have a plan to make that second storey disability-accessible. Health and safety concerns should be the only reason for any exception to this.

7. When TDSB decides which schools to close due to reduced enrollment, a priority should be placed on keeping open schools with more physical accessibility, while a priority should be given to closing schools that are the most lacking in physical accessibility, or for which retrofitting is the most costly. For example, none of the 85 TDSB schools that are now accessible should be closed.

8. TDSB should adopt a policy that TDSB off-site events will only be held at venues with built environment accessibility.

9. TDSB should designate a chief accessibility officer, with ultimate responsibility for all accessibility efforts at TDSB, including accessibility of the built environment. This position should report directly to the Director of Education. TDSB’s chief accessibility officer should periodically report to TDSB trustees and to SEAC on TDSB plans and progress on built environment accessibility.

**Motion #4 – Draft 1 (April 20, 2016)**

**Ensuring Digital Accessibility at TDSB**

SEAC recommends that:

1. TDSB should ensure that:

a) Educational equipment and technology, including hardware and software, deployed in classrooms should be designed based on universal design principles, to ensure that as many students with different abilities can use them.

b) TDSB Learning Management Systems (LMS) should be accessible to staff and students who use adaptive technology. They should have all accessibility features invoked and available to ensure that information posted through them will be accessible to students using adaptive technology such as screen readers or voice recognition tools. TDSB should ensure that no teacher is able to turn off any feature of the MS that is accessible in favour of one that is not.

c) TDSB websites and intranet content should be fully accessible, with all new information posted on them fully accessible.

d) Electronic documents created at TDSB should be created in accessible formats unless there is some exceptional and unavoidable reason demanding otherwise. If a PDF document is created, it should conform to ISO 14289 with an alternate version of the content posted in Microsoft Word or HTML format.

e) Software used to produce TDSB documents such as report cards, Individual Education Plans, or other key documents should be designed to ensure that they produce these documents in accessible formats.

f) Only textbooks and learning software should be procured which include full information technology accessibility. Any textbook used in any learning environment must be accessible to teachers and students with disabilities at the time of procurement. For example, if a textbook is available in EPUB or PDF format, the textbooks must meet the international standard for that file format. For PDF it is ISO 14289 and for EPUB it is the W3C Digital Publishing Guidelines currently under review. If a textbook is available in print, the publisher should be required to provide the digital version of the textbook in an accessible format (for example, EPUB or PDF) at the same time the print version is delivered to the school/Board. Both of these formats, if created to be accessible, provide conversion-ready content for students who might need Braille or large print versions.

2. TDSB should establish, implement and publicize information technology procurement accessibility requirements, to ensure that no information technology is purchased unless it ensures full digital accessibility. Digital and information technology accessibility should be included in all Requests for Proposal (RFP) or other tenders for sale of products and services to TDSB.

3. As recommended in Motion #3, TDSB should establish the position of chief accessibility officer, who should have ultimate responsibility for digital accessibility.

4. TDSB should establish a detailed plan for ensuring digital accessibility. It should include a monitoring/ audit component. TDSB should semi-annually report on progress towards digital and information technology accessibility to TDSB trustees and to SEAC.

5. TDSB should include in its digital accessibility plan a detailed plan for training TDSB staff, including teachers, on ensuring digital/information technology accessibility in the classroom, on the use of access technology (where needed) and on steps how to create accessible documents and web content.

**Digital and Information Technology Accessibility at TDSB**

**Response to Questions about the TDSB Virtual Library**

Ruth Hall, Program Coordinator for Library Learning Resources & Global Education and Interdisciplinary Studies, TDSB Teaching and Learning Department provided information on the TDSV Virtual Library:

Most purchased resources in the Virtual Library include a read-aloud feature. This is one of the features looked for when purchases of digital resources are being made. The ReadWrite Gold program available to all TDSB students also has a toolbar option for read aloud. However, in some cases it may be more convenient for a student to utilize the read aloud native to the purchased product than to use the ReadWrite Gold toolbar.

A write up about the Virtual Library is provided in TDSB Student Planners, as well as a list of resources with Read aloud. The following provides an example of what appears in the Student Planners.

*The TDSB Virtual Library is accessible to students, staff and families from any internet enabled device inside and outside of the TDSB network providing round the clock access to eBooks, news/magazine/journal articles, streamed video, images, recommended websites/tools and more. The Virtual Library includes a combination of purchased resources with features including read-a-loud, translation, images, video, citation, and persistent links; as well as a selection of curriculum relevant recommended sites and online tools. Some resources require logins when outside of the TDSB network. When logged into the Library Catalogue, found on the Virtual Library, no passwords are needed for eBooks or streaming media. Learnmarks with login information are available from each school's teacher-librarian.*

For 2016-17, the range of resources with read aloud includes:

* Encyclopedia Britannica, K to 12 resource
* Encyclopedia Universalis Junior, French Language, Junior to Intermediate
* BookFlix, fiction/nonfiction eBooks on paired themes, emergent readers, primary
* PebbleGo, animals and science, article database, emergent readers, primary
* CultureGrams, global/cultural/provincial information, gr 3 to 12
* Capstone eBooks, non-fiction science, history, health, high interest/low vocab fiction, some primary, mostly junior to intermediate
* Infobase eBooks (science topics only), intermediate to secondary
* Gale Virtual Reference Library, eBooks, wide range of topics, intermediate to secondary
* All of our article databases have a read aloud feature (Canadian Points of View; Canadian Reference Centre; Science Reference Centre; History Reference Centre; Literary Reference Centre; Global Issues in Context; Teen Health and Wellness), non-fiction, wide range of topics, gr 6 to 12
* Streaming media databases would also be useful for accessibility (video and audio) - Learn 360, K to 12; CBC Curio, primary math/art/music and junior to secondary content

The next page shows the information included in the Student Planners. When using the Virtual Library **outside of the TDSB network**, Login/Passwords are used and are listed on the Student Planner page, but have been removed *for external posting in the SEAC Minutes.*

http://zwebwwwdnntst/Portals/library/home_iconVL.png**Connect to your TDSB Virtual Library** in school and from anywhere online for news/magazine/journal articles, eBooks, streamed video, images, recommended websites/tools and more, to answer questions, solve problems, tackle projects and have fun.

**There are 3 ways to find your Virtual Library when outside of the TDSB network, choose the one that works for you:**

1. <http://www.tdsb.on.ca> – *Find your school* (top nav bar) – *School name* – *Virtual Library* link (left nav bar)

2. **Search** on the Internet for “school name TDSB Virtual Library”

3. <http://aw.tdsb.on.ca> – sign in with student/employee number and network password –*My home* tab (top nav bar) – *Virtual Library* (left nav bar)

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| --- | --- |
| **Virtual Library Resources** (*look for read-a-loud, translation, images, video, citation, persistent link features*) | |
| **Library Catalogue** | Search your school library. Login with your TDSB network account and check to see what you have borrowed, find and read eBooks, find and view streaming video. |
| **Encyclopedias** | A great place to start when you want to find out about almost anything |
| **Article databases** | Find current news/magazine/journal articles, topic overviews, and information written for students from hundreds of sources, in one simple search. |
| **Media** images, video, audio | Streaming video, images, and music for projects, for homework and for personal interest. |
| **eBooks** | Fiction and non-fiction eBooks for school assignments or for pleasure |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Use Login/Password when using the Virtual Library outside of the TDSB network** | | | | | |
| **Resource Name** (format/type) | **LOGIN** | **PASS**  **WORD** | | | **DESCRIPTION** |
| BookFLIX (eBooks) | xxx | xxx | | | Fiction/non-fiction paired texts, 12 themes, **elementary** |
| Britannica Online (encyclopedia) | xxx | xxx | | | Start here for all subjects, 3 reading entry points, **K to gr 12** |
| Canadian Encyclopedia (encyclopedia) | no password needed | | | | Start here for all subjects related to Canada, **gr 5 to 12, ENG/FR** |
| Canadian Literary Reference Centre (article database) | xxx | | xxx | | Canadian writers, English, drama, **gr 7 to 12** |
| Canadian Points of View (article database) | xxx | | xxx | | Current issues, Canadian point of view/perspective, **gr 6 to 12** |
| Canadian Reference Centre (article database) | xxx | | xxx | | Current information, Canadian content, **gr 6 to 12** |
| Capstone (eBooks) | xxx | | xxx | | Ancient civilizations, science, health, quick reads, **gr 3 to 10** |
| Career Cruising (database) | *Ask your Guidance Department* | | | | Career information, **gr 7 to 12** |
| Culture Grams (database) | xxx | | xxx | | Countries, provinces, culture/maps/images/statistics, **K to gr 12** |
| Curio CBC (streaming media) *also see Educator Resources for teacher home access* | in school access for students | | | | Streaming media, Canadian content, current issues, **gr 7 to 12,** **ENG/FR** |
| Encyclopedie Universalis Jr AND Sr (encyclopedias) | xxx | | | xxx | French language, two reading levels, read-aloud, **gr 4 to 12, FR** |
| Explora (article database search interface) | xxx | | | xxx | Searches multiple EBSCO article databases at the same time |
| Follett Shelf (eBooks) | xxx | | | xxx | Junior/Intermediate fiction books, biography, **gr 1 to 12** |
| Global Issues in Context (article database) | xxx | | | xxx | Global topics, overviews, articles, video, **gr 7 to 12** |
| Gale Virtual Reference Library (eBooks) | xxx | | | xxx | All subjects topic overviews, reference, e-books, **gr 7 to 12** |
| History Reference Centre (article database) | xxx | | | xxx | World, Ancient Civilizations, Explorers, European, **gr 7 to 12** |
| InfoBase e-Books (eBooks) | xxx | | | xxx | Science topics – e-books, **gr 6 to 12** |
| Jobs People Do (database) | xxx | | | xxx | Careers, experiential learning, co-op, articles, videos **gr 7 to 12** |
| Learn 360 (streaming media) *also see Educator Resources for teacher access* | xxx | | | xxx | Streamed media, all subjects,  **K to 12** |
| Literary Reference Centre (article database) | xxx | | | xxx | English, drama, **gr 7 to 12** |
| Naxos Music Library (streaming media) | xxx | | | xxx | Music, English, drama, public speaking, **gr 5 to 12** |
| NoveList K to 8 (article database) | xxx | | | xxx | Choosing fiction books. What to read next… **K to gr 9** |
| OERB *also see Educator Resources for teacher access* | xxx | | | xxx | All subjects – lessons, tutorials |
| PebbleGo -Animals, Earth & Space (database) | xxx | | | xxx | Animals, Science, environment, **K to gr 4** |
| Primary Search (article database) | xxx | | | xxx | Wide range of topics for elementary students |
| Imagine the Learning/Research Success (research) | xxx | | | xxx | Helpful guides for inquiry /research projects, **gr 1 to 12** |
| Research Success in French (Liens français) | xxx | | | xxx | Helpful guide for inquiry /research projects **gr 7 to 12, FR** |
| Science Reference Centre (article databases) | xxx | | | xxx | Science, health, geography, **gr 6-12** |
| TABvue (eBooks) | xxx | | | xxx | Canadian information, social studies, **Gr 4-10, ENG/FR** |
| Teen Health & Wellness (article database) | xxx | | | xxx | Mental, physical health, teen issues, self-help, **gr 7 to 12** |
| **EDUCATOR RESOURCES *for TDSB staff***  Teaching Resources (bookable/streaming media, kits), classroom resources, Prof. Library resources, etc. | Professional Library eBooks (ASCD, Follett, EBSCO, Proquest); streaming media (CBC Curio FR/ENG & Learn 360 etc.); Les Plan FR/ENG classroom resources, STEM, OERB, OSAPAC resources and more. | | | | |

***PASSWORDS MAY NOT BE POSTED ELECTRONICALLY OUTSIDE OF THE TDSB NETWORK***