

Approved Minutes

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

**Meeting Date:** January 15, 2024from 7:00 p.m.– 8:51 p.m. (Hybrid)

**Chair:** **David Lepofsky – Newly elected Chair**

**Vice-Chair:** **Richard Carter - Newly elected Vice Chair**

A meeting of the Special Education Community Advisory Committee convened on January 15, 2024, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:51 p.m. at 5050 Yonge Street, with David Lepofsky (Chair) and Richard Carter (Vice Chair) presiding.

**Attendance:**

**Members**:

Melissa Rosen Association for Bright Children (ABC)

Leo Lagnado Autism Society of Ontario (Toronto Chapter)

Richard Carter Down Syndrome Association of Toronto (DSAT)

Steven Lynette Epilepsy Toronto

Nora Green Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community

Diane Montgomery (Alternate) Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community

Guilia Barbuto Learning Disabilities Association Toronto District

Aline Chan (Alternate), Community Living

David Lepofsky Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC)

Dana Chapman (Alternate) Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC)

Bronwen Alsop VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

Stephany Ragany (Alternate) VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

Nerissa Hutchinson Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support

Tracey O’Regan, Community Living

Beth Dangerfield CADDAC – Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada

Aliza Chaqpar Easter Seals Ontario

Trustee Michelle Aarts

Trustee Zakir Patel

Saira Chhibber (LC1)

Jean-Paul Ngana (LC2)

Jordan Glass (LC2)

Kirsten Doyle (LC3)

**Regrets**

Trustee Liban Hassan

Izabella Pruska-Oldenhof (LC4)

**Staff**

Louise Sirisko, Associate Director, Innovation and Equitable Outcomes

Nandy Palmer, System Superintendent, Special Education and Inclusion

Angela Nardi-Addesa – Retired Superintendent of Education

Craig Snider – Executive Officer – Business Services

Alison Board, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education

Effie Stathopoulos, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education

Katia Palumbo. Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education

Andrea Roach, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education

Wendy Terro, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education

Elizabeth Schaeffer, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education ECPP

Mun Shu Wong (Audio/Video); Erin Pallet (Audio/Video Assistant)

Elizabeth Chalmers, Administrative Liaison (SOE)

Lianne Dixon. TDSB SEAC Liaison

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|  | Item | Discussion | Action Items/Recommendation |
|  | Land Acknowledgement |  System Superintendent Nandy Palmer |  |
|  | Election of Chair and Vice Chair | System Superintendent Nandy Palmer introduced the election process, and the election took place with a SEAC member nominating for David Lepofsky for Chair and Richard Carter for Vice Chair. Both accepted the nominations and were acclaimed.System Superintendent Palmer thanked Jean-Paul Ngana and Michelle Aarts for their hard work over the past year as Chair and Vice Chair  | David Lepofsky is acclaimed as ChairRichard Carter is acclaimed as Vice Chair |
|  | Approval of Agenda | No amendments | Melissa Rosen moved to approveSeconded by Nora GreenApproved |
|  | Conflicts of Interest |  | No conflicts of interest were declared |
|  | Approval of Minutes from the November SEAC MeetingAction Log update |  | Moved to approve by Melissa Rosen. Seconded by Nora Green. ApprovedThe Action Log was not discussed. |
|  | SEPRC Review Consultation | Angela Nardi-Addesa – Retired Superintendent of EducationSEPRC - Special Education Placement Recommendation CommitteePresented a Slide presentation Re: SEPRC The following information was shared.* Duty to Accommodate per the OHRC – Ontario Human Rights Code
* SEPRC - Registration and Placement – for students with extremely complex medical and or physical disabilities which cannot be met in their homeschool even if for a short time.
* TDSB registers **all students** in their home school per reg 181 – this prevents ableism, removes barriers, encourages fairness, and respect
* **Criteria, Structure, Steps** – pages 93-98 of the Special Education Plan
* **Belief Statement and Research** -Per Reg, 181-TDSB believes all students enter and are welcomed to their neighborhood schools. Research proves integrated placements are critical. TDSB provides choices for families and students and families play a critical role in the SEPRC process

**Reflection question** – Share your association’s perspective on the strengths and ideas for improvement in the TDSB SEPRC processSEAC members provided feedbackAutism Ontario * refine the criteria and include the term disability
* should be available to all students with autism including level 1 students who are not as severe as others
* should not use an outdated definition of autism

Inclusion Ontario* SEPRC is segregational as it directs parents exclusively to an Intensive Support Program as a service delivery model
* Refusal to Admit – Is a process that doesn’t openly welcome students to the TDSB

Association for Bright Children* SEPRCs work for all kids and TDSB has an excellent SEPRC process that all boards should offer;
* let’s not lose sight of all students and how students should be placed in their environment

Epilepsy Toronto * Asked about when a parent comes for SEPRC (parent’s request) – what is the Board’s desired outcome?
* The Board always offers home school or regular classroom first but if parents do want an ISP (congregated classroom) then they go to SEPRC.

Community Representative (LC2)* SEPRC process is a great process by the TDSB
* we should be building on the outcomes from the SEPRC discussions, including the motion adopted by SEAC at its June 2023’s meeting that was presented a Board FBEC - e.g., following up on the next steps as directed by FBEC.

Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children* Expressed thanks for a most refreshing presentation, reflecting core human rights law and Reg 181
* The duty to accommodate under the Human Rights Code is a compelling obligation and it is good that TDSB is recognizing here that it owes this over-arching duty.
* TDSB needs to add that a regular class setting is great as long as there are “supports” - a regular class “with supports”.
* SEPRC should not just consider the placement of students with disabilities, but also what measures need to be in place, such as services, programs and supports, to ensure that the student’s disability is fully accommodated on Day 1. This must be addressed in spring before school begins so that supports, placements, and accommodations are in place on Day 1 of the new school year
 | Angela Nardi-Addesa to take back all of the suggestions made by SEAC members for consideration and let SEAC know next steps and what changes were made.SEAC Liaison, Lianne Dixon to share the Slide presentation with SEAC members (shared) |
| 4 | Revised Estimates | Craig Snider presented a budget update * **Reserves** – as of August 31, 2023 to Aug 31, 2024 – have 29.1 million of reserves and a deficit of 15.3 million therefore 13.8 million left in reserves. We are in the 2nd year of deficit recovery plan. In the 3rd year , we need a balanced budget with the Ministry (next year)
* Feb 19 – Community Information Session and Feedback - webinars – 1 day session and 2 evening session and a session recording will be made available
* FBEC (March 4th) will include all of the feedback from webinars and surveys. Will be shared with Trustees
* Capital Budget presented in May 2024
* GSN to be presented in April 2024

Discussion followed with SEAC members: The board won’t know about staff cuts for special education until after February 14th.How will staff collect SEAC’s input about the budget? How will trustees get the information? On March 4th, we will see the feedback from SEAC presented.In advance of February 12 – what proposed cuts to staffing or other resources will affect special education classes? Having this information would allow us to present at the March 4 FBEC.Associate Director Louise Sirisko – congratulated the new Chair and Vice ChairAssociate Director Louise Sirisko reiterated to SEAC that the board will be completely transparent about any reductions to special education. At this point, we are not planning on any reductions but if this changes it will be brought to SEAC.SEAC members were encouraged to send questions to the Budget Working Group.  | Action Items:Craig Snider to provide some information related to staff reductions or reductions to resources to Special Education by February 12th. |
| 5 | Leadership Report  | System Superintendent Nandy Palmer and Associate Director Louise SiriskoThe written Leadership Report and PowerPoint were shared.* Project Search applications are open, providing work opportunities
* Sharing news that Centrally Assigned Principal, Wendy Terro has taken a position with the Ministry of Education. Thanks were given to Wendy for her hard work.
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| 6 | Trustees Report  | Trustees – Michelle Aarts Governance Committee - New operating and governance procedure was drafted for Community Advisory Committees – will send the link to SEACThe CAC guidelines apply to both CACs and Statutory Committees. SEAC will be given an opportunity for input.Special Education Department will share their report around the IPRC Appeal Process – the Trustees will be advised first and then it will be shared with SEAC. | New Operating and Governance procedure drafted – link to be sentSEAC members will be given an opportunity to provide input (sent) |
| 7 | Association and Community UpdatesWorking Group Updates | Working Groups* K-12 Working Group – N/A
* Budget Working Group – plans to meet before the February SEAC Meeting. Members are Invited and encouraged to participate in the webinars and feedback links, provided by Craig Snider.
* Special Education Plan Working Group is seeking feedback on the Special Education Plan- Section E,F and G, I and J – Assessment, Identification, and IPRCs
* Terms of Reference Working Group (AD HOC) has not met yet
* SEAC Priorities Working Group (AD HOC) has not met yet

Working Groups will be discussed at the February meetingAssociations* Autism Ontario (distributed)
* Community Living (distributed)
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| 8 | * Other Business
* Correspondence
* Adjournment

**Next meeting** * February 12, 2024
 | New Chair David Lepofsky thanked Jean-Paul Ngana and Trustee Michelle Aarts for their work as Chair and Vice ChairMotion to adjourn at 8:51 p.m. | Melissa Rosen – motion to adjournNora Green – seconded the motionMeeting Adjourned |