A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was convened at 7:04 p.m. on Monday, February 6, 2012, in the Boardroom, 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario, with Paul Cross presiding.

The following committee members were present: Diana Avon, Loris Bennett, Heather Breckenridge, Christina Buczek, Richard Carter, Paul Cross, Dr. Robert Gates, Clovis Grant, Debra Hayden, Olga Ingrahm, Gal Koren, Jean-Paul Ngana, Ginny Pearce, Phillip Sargent, Nancy Ann Turner Wright and Trustee Howard Kaplan.

The following alternate member was present: Bantyehun Tezazu.

Regrets were received from Steven Lynette (Chair), Dayib Nur and Tammy Simon.

The following staff members were present: Karen Forbes, Cindy Burley, David Johnston, Margo Ratsep and Denise Joseph-Dowers.

1. **Approval of the Agenda**

With the permission of the meeting, Paul Cross chaired the meeting, in the absence of the chair. Ginny Pearce moved: That the agenda be approved.

The motion was carried.

2. **Declarations of Possible Conflict of Interest**

None declared.

3. **Confirmation of the Minutes of January 16, 2012**

Gal Koren moved: That the minutes of the SEAC meeting held on January 16, 2012 be confirmed. The motion was carried.

4. **Delegations and/or Presentations**

(a) **Giftedness Program and Assessment**

SEAC received a presentation (see page 4) from Matthew Reid and Cheryl Strickland presenting information on the Board’s gifted program.

(b) **Special Education Allocation and Expenditures**

SEAC received a presentation from Craig Snider presenting information on the actual Special Education allocation and expenditures for 2010-2011 (see page 13) and a brief update on the 2012-13 budget process.
5. **Business Arising from the Minutes of January 16, 2012**

(a) **Individual Education Plans** [Page 3, Item 7]

At the meeting of January 16, 2012, SEAC deferred consideration of the matter pending receipt of information on the legal requirements of principals re compliance with regard to IEPs and the legal recourse available for parents.

Karen Forbes reported on the advice provided by the Board’s counsel. Following discussion, staff undertook to develop a list of best practices at the secondary level, so that teachers would be familiar with all aspects of their students’ Individual Education Plans.

(b) **Election of Vice-chair of the Committee**

At the meeting of December 5, 2011, SEAC decided that the position of vice-chair be left vacant until January 2012.

Staff informed the meeting that the matter of the appointment of a third trustee to SEAC would be considered at the Board meeting scheduled for February 8, 2012. SEAC decided to defer the election of the vice-chair of the committee, pending the appointment of a third trustee to SEAC.

6. **Parent/Guardian Facilitator**

Karen Forbes informed the meeting that the Facilitator subcommittee met on December 15, 2011 and shared some ideas around the parent/guardian facilitator position. In response, Ms. Forbes developed a list of parent support vehicles (see page 14). At the invitation of Karen Forbes, Trustee Cathy Dandy spoke to SEAC bout the parent support vehicles and offered to work with subcommittee on the matter.

7. **Trustees’ Report**

No matters to report.

8. **Reports/Updates from Representatives on TDSB and other Committees**

(a) **Communications Subcommittee**

The Communications subcommittee held a teleconference on February 2, 2012. Clovis Grant presented a report (see page 15) on the meeting.

9. **Correspondence received by the Chair**

(a) Email dated Monday, January 30, 2012 from Clovis Grant regarding Extend-A-Family workshop with Kathie Snow as presenter on Tuesday, February 7, 2012.

10. **Senior Superintendent’s Report**

Karen Forbes presented a report (see page 16) to the Committee.

11. **System Superintendent’s Report**

Cindy Burley presented a report (see page 20) to the Committee.
12. **Professional Support Services Report**
Dave Johnston presented a report (see page 21) to the Committee.

13. **Local SEAC Association Reports**
(a) **Community Living Toronto**
Clovis Grant informed the meeting that February is National Inclusive Education month.

14. **Adjournment**
At 9:30 p.m. Richard Carter moved: **That the meeting be adjourned.**
The motion was carried.

Paul Cross
Chair pro tem
Gifted Programming in the Toronto District School Board

SEAC Presentation
February 6, 2012

An Overview...

- Gifted Programs in the TDSB
- The Identification Process
- The Gifted Alternative Program
- Commonly Asked Questions
Current Information...

- 1-2% of the general population
- In the TDSB (as of October 31, 2010):
  - 2.2% of students had a Gifted exceptionality
  - 5,674 out of 259,281 students

Twice Exceptional Students...

- 9% of Gifted students have dual exceptionalities
- In addition to a Gifted exceptionality, students also have another exceptionality:
  - Learning Disability
  - Behaviour
  - Autism
Identified Gifted Students...

- 1.4% (3,695) are in Gifted Intensive Support Programs
- 0.8% (1,979) are in the Regular Class

Trend Data

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>4496</td>
<td>4853</td>
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Percentage of Gifted Students:
- 2001 – 0.5%
- 2010 – 2.2%
- Overall the TDSB population declined from approximately 300,000 to 260,000
Increases in the number of Gifted students are due to...

- Change in gifted criteria after amalgamation
- Change in criteria for:
  - English Language Learners
  - Students with a Learning Disability exceptionality

The Identification Process...

The Ministry of Education defines a Gifted Exceptionality as:

An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the levels of educational potential indicated.
During the IPRC process, the TDSB takes into account...

- Classroom documentation
  - Teacher checklists
- Educational assessments
  - Developmental Reading Assessment
- Family documentation
  - Parent checklists
- Professional Assessments

Entry into the Gifted Program...

- Majority enter at Grade 4
- Grade 7 and 9 are also “popular” entry grades
The Gifted Alternative Program...

- Continue to focus on breadth, depth and pace
- 2010/2011 – workshops to introduce the program
- September 2011 – workshops to implement the program in schools
- Spring 2012 – review implementation process with administrators and provide ongoing support

Standards and Essential Components...

- This year, we will be establishing Standards for the Gifted Program:
  - Transitions
  - Meaningful Inclusion
  - Exceptionality Specific Programming (i.e., the Gifted Alternative Program)
  - Appropriate Learning Environments
  - A Collaborative Learning Team
  - Meaningful and Genuine Parent / Guardian / Caregiver Involvement
Next Steps...

• Review our processes in the areas of:
  
  – Supporting schools in understanding what to look for when identifying potentially Gifted students
  
  – The assessment process

Commonly Asked Questions...

• Are there Primary Gifted Intensive Support Programs?
  
  – There are very few Primary Gifted ISP programs

  • Assessments
  • Support at the child’s home school
    – IEP
    – Differentiated Instruction
    – Smaller primary classes
Commonly Asked Questions...

- Are there Gifted French Immersion classes?
  - The TDSB does not offer Gifted French Immersion programs
    - Very small number of students would mean only 2 gifted classes for the system
      - Location of classes
      - Bussing

Commonly Asked Questions...

- How are students with dual exceptionalities supported?
  - Support through the CBRM model
    - All students are now included in the base allocation for CBRM support
  - School Support Team
    - TDSB services
    - Outside agency support
# Special Education
## 2010 – 2011 Actuals

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<td>Total Special Education Allocation (excludes SEA per pupil)</td>
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<td>Total Special Education Expenditures</td>
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**Special Education Funding vs Expenditures**

$\{(17,803,567)\}

Note: SEA per pupil amount is separately reconciled to expenditures
PARENTAL SUPPORT VEHICLES

INTERMEDIARY
- provides factual information about the TDSB and its special education programs, services, policies and procedures;
- facilitates parents navigating the system and inform them whom to involve, what to expect, options available, etc;
- connect parents with special education resources, programs, services, and personnel as well as additional resources such as translations, interpreters, professional support services, etc.
- advise parents how to avoid or resolve disagreements or conflicts;
- help parents understand their rights and responsibilities; and
- dispel any misunderstandings or misgivings parents have.

FACILITATOR
- functions at the level of conflict;
- makes sure there is an agreed-upon agenda;
- keeps the discussion focused on the student's demonstrated strengths, needs and related program and service considerations;
- encourages the active participation by each party;
- identifies the issue and the purpose of the meeting;
- helps to clarify everyone's position, including using inquiry to identify any unwarranted assumptions or misconceptions and bring to light all relevant information;
- allows respectful disagreements;
- intervenes to limit interruptions and stop abusive behaviour; and
- promotes the exploration of possible shared solutions that are realistic and attainable.

PARENT GUIDE
- functions at the level of disagreement/conflict;
- provides information on available TDSB programs, services, and resources based on their experience and special training;
- assists parents to interpret, understand and navigate the system and to find the best possible services for their children with special needs:
- possesses lived experience in having a child (or children) with special needs that is in (or was) the TDSB so that they can provide the emotional support parents need; and
- offers emotional and affirmational support (verbal or nonverbal messages) designed to enhance a parent's confidence that he or she can respond effectively to the demands of supporting a child with special needs.

1 The intermediary position is a front line position designed as a “one stop” entry point through which parents of children with special needs can receive information and support to direct them to the appropriate person, program or service and to reduce anxiety, frustration and alienation.
2 At times, it is helpful to have a person, not directly involved with the student, act as facilitators to help guide the resolution process. Facilitation occurs during face-to-face meetings and the process involves identifying the issue or issues, finding common ground and looking at mutually acceptable solutions.
3 Parent to parent programs provide emotional and informational support through individuals and/or groups to parents of children with special needs by matching a trained veteran parent to a parent seeking information and support.
From: Clovis Grant

Communications subcommittee

Website:

- Recommend in the Features section to replace the SEAC link with the Special Education link. The SEAC link would instead appear prominently on the Spec Ed link. Rationale: Parents are more interested in knowing about Spec Ed and once they are on the Spec Ed site, at that point they would gain knowledge about SEAC

- Making the website more user-friendly:
  
  o Provide information about the quadrants to make parents aware of how services are offered and who to connect with for what

  o Create a grid of information on the site based on the particular topics that parents most want to know about. It would provide users with useful information about the different services, how they are offered, who delivers them, etc.. DIANA TO WORK ON THIS

  o Create one pagers to provide quick information to parents based on most common concerns. Could be done by exceptionality. Highlight parts of the Spec Ed plan. Pages would be printable and in different languages. THIS WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO PUT TOGETHER AND WORKING WITH MEDIA SERVICES TO ENSURE ALL DOCUMENTS HAVE THE SAME LOOK

- Update the SEAC Display board. CLOVIS TO FOLLOW UP WITH A SEAC MEMBER WITH CREATIVE BACKGROUND TO CREATE ‘THE LOOK’

- Other communications committee members to give feedback on other website access concerns
MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENT ON CATEGORIES OF EXCEPTIONALITIES

On December 19th, 2011 the Ministry of Education released a memorandum to school boards on the Categories of Exceptionality (available at the following link) http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/2011CategoryException.pdf. In it, the Ministry reaffirms the existing categories of exceptionalities in *Special Education: A Guide for Educators (2001)* which are designed to address the wide range of conditions that may affect a student’s ability to learn, whether diagnosed or not, that could lead to learning difficulties. It also reaffirms the policy from 1980 that states that all students with demonstrable learning based needs are entitled to appropriate accommodations in the form of special education programs and services including classroom based accommodations.

The memo goes onto say that a student with ADHD (or Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Tourette Syndrome, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, and Fibromyalgia Syndrome) could present learning needs and be deemed exceptional under one of the exceptionalities.

Some people and organizations have interpreted this section to mean that children can be categorized in the communication (learning disability) category regardless of whether criteria for a learning disability are met. The word “categorized” has implied to some that a child can identified as exceptional on the basis of a diagnosis such as ADHD and this is causing confusion within our system.

The TDSB has clarified the memo with the Ministry. The MOE has clarified that ADHD is not one of the categories of exceptionality but there is no barrier to students with ADHD from being identified as exceptional if they meet a particular exceptionality’s criteria. However, a medical diagnosis alone does not provide sufficient justification for identification, nor is a medical diagnosis necessary to obtain special education programs and services.

Therefore, this memo does not signal a change for us in the TDSB. If a student with FASD, ADHD, etc meets the criteria for exceptionality, the IPRC can provide the designation. However, the exceptionality would not be provided solely on the fact that the student had a medical diagnosis of ADHD or FASD, etc. We have always met the needs of students by providing them appropriate accommodations through programs and services, which includes developing IEPs that address attention, self regulation, executive functioning, social skills, etc. This practice is compliant with the memo and will continue.
AUDIT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Between now and the end of May, an audit of special education in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) will be conducted. The Regional Internal Audit is a Ministry of Education initiative which all Boards in the Province are undergoing. While these audits have a financial aspect to them, they are focused more on policies and procedures and the adherence to those policies and procedures. The specific objectives of our audit are to:

• identify risks and determine how well we manage them;
• establish if our operational procedures are in compliance, with legislation, and Ministry and TDSB policies and procedures; and
• review our staff allocation processes and decide if we are recording data accurately; and
• identify the mechanisms that are in place that we use to respond to unforeseen risks.

The audit will identify, I believe, that mechanisms are in place to mitigate against most unforeseen risks and that they are implemented effectively and efficiently while also highlighting the areas where we must improve.

DEMONSTRATION CLASSROOMS

At the beginning of January, Special Education published a booklet that identified demonstration classes that teachers can visit between now and June. The demonstration classroom experiences are designed to enable teachers to learn through peer observation, collaborative enquiry, reflection and action. A teacher’s learning objectives are personalized beginning with a choice to visit a specific exemplary program, accompanied by a Special Education consultant or coordinator and a small number of other teachers with similar interests. Teachers then engage in shared observation, discussion and analysis of exemplary practices, consequently building their understanding of teaching and learning and guiding their future instructional decisions. Each demonstration class experience is composed of a half day and includes orientation, observation, debriefing, action planning and follow up.

IEP/IPRC INFORMATION NIGHT FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS/CAREGIVERS

The parent sessions providing information on the IEP and IPRC processes that we hold twice a year in the East and West regions were held January 24th. About 170 people attended the two sessions and provided positive feedback on the sessions. Child minding and interpreters were provided as required.

STAFF ALLOCATION

In accordance with the May 21, 2008 decision by Board for SEAC to receive reports on trends and issues related to program delivery, I am following up on the December and January reports to SEAC on the trends and issues related to delivery of intensive support programs for students with special needs as we begin to allocate staff for 2012-13. Each year the Board approves the special education teacher allocation. Traditionally, the department allocates approximately:

Elem – 1699.0
Sec – 572.0
For a total of 2271 teachers

Total Support Staff – 2494

The Board has a projected structural deficit of approximately 85 million dollars. Budget consultation and discussions begin this month; consequently, savings may be required from special education and the traditional central and school staff allocation may have to be reduced.

We are anticipating slight increases in programs for autism and diagnostic kindergarten and decreases in communication-learning disability, behaviour and mild intellectual disability classrooms.

We continue to monitor the impact on students of closing and moving classes but anticipate a greater impact if we are asked to decrease our budget.

The allocation model for Educational Assistants for the Community Based Resource Model was traditionally based on enrolment. We have revised that allocation for 2012-13 to include LOI (as per board policy), number of students with IEPs and number with IPRCs. This approach is in alignment with the CBRM teacher model but puts more emphasis on enrolment than the teacher model does because the EA can work anywhere in the building with students not just in CBRM so enrolment is a significant factor.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION COMMITTEE**

This is to advise you that the TDSB process for the identification and placement of students who are not currently registered and attending a TDSB school is changing. In the past these students have been presented to an IPRC where exceptionality may have been conferred and a placement decision made. However, the process for identification and placement, under the Education Act and regulations, is intended to apply only to “pupils” of the school board. An Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) of the school board has no jurisdiction to make such decisions for students who are not enrolled in its schools. While our past practice has been well-intentioned and focused on the best interests of students, we have determined that it would be prudent to adhere to the regulation in all future proceedings.

To that end, we are introducing a process that will continue to keep the needs of students foremost and will meet regulatory requirements. A Special Education Program Recommendation Committee (SEPRC) meeting will take the place of the IPRC meeting.

Examples of situations where SEPRC meetings may be appropriate include:
- students currently attending private schools with the hope of entering a TDSB program for the gifted in September;
- students with significant needs who are currently in specialized pre-school settings and will enter school for the first time in September; and
- students currently attending intensive support programs in other boards who will be moving into the TDSB for September.

The new process is to be implemented immediately. Principals will inform families of this process when they approach a TDSB school and need to have a program recommendation.
SEAC Recommendation to Board

The recommendation that SEAC passed at the January SEAC meeting regarding accessible school busses being available to schools for field trips was discussed at the Program and School Services Committee. The transportation department informed the committee that currently there are 4 integrated buses that can be accessed by the schools; two with Stock Transportation, and one each with First Student Canada and Denny’s Bus Lines. These busses provide service for students not only here in Toronto but also for schools in the GTA as well. The department has updated the TDSB intranet to indicate that these types of vehicles are available for schools to use for field trips. Transportation will put a notice in our internal communication for next Monday so that schools will be aware of this service. The intention with our next contract is to ensure that any school bus operator with more than 100 contracted buses has at least one wheelchair accessible bus available for schools and students to be used on field trips. This information will go to Board on February 8, 2012.
Speaker Series

On January 25, staff from the Scarborough Hospital ADHD Clinic, gave a comprehensive overview of ADHD in school-aged children, including diagnosis and treatment options. This session was well attended with 50 participants that included parents, regular class and special education class teachers, support staff, professional support services staff and central special education staff. On February 22, ADHD Clinic staff will return to speak about classroom strategies.

Target Ten and Focus Five: Special Education Component of the Board Improvement Plan

We continue to promote the Target Ten and Focus Five initiatives. Central staff have analyzed each school’s submissions to determine best practices, as well as areas requiring follow up. Family of School’s consultants are providing differentiated professional learning and support to schools based upon their local needs. Topics have included: assistive technology and EQAO, the implementation of the secondary modifications project, self-advocacy, addressing test anxiety, etc.

Central staff have also been involved in training on the Interactive Whiteboard. They will be using the whiteboards in some of their presentations in order to model the teaching strategies that can be used for our students.
Review of Professional Support Services
Deloitte has completed the review of Professional Support Services. They have presented a final report to the Program, School Services Committee and it will be presented at the Board Meeting on February 8th. Over 1000 individuals participated through the completion of a survey or by attending a focus group. Staff have reviewed the results and recommendations and have identified themes that will guide the changes that are necessary. The review has recognized the strengths of each service, as well as the responsibility of TDSB PSS staff as a whole to provide leadership to a variety of communities, and this is a foundation that will be used to address the challenges that have been outlined and the recommendations that have been made.

Professional Support Services Professional Development
As a result of funds made available through the Provincial Discussion Table during the last round of collective bargaining, the Professional Student Services Personnel and Professional Support Services are putting on the following PD sessions for staff on February 17th:

**Psychology** – Dr. Heather Fiske, “Solution-Focused Approaches to Suicide Prevention”
**Social Work and Attendance Services** –
Glenda Mattinson, “Introduction to Non-Violent Communication”
Heidi Bornstein, “Mindfulness in Education”
**Child and Youth Services** – Robert Solomon, LL.B., “A Legal Primer for School-Based Child and Youth Workers”
**Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy** -
Dr. Peter Rosenbaum, “Measurement and Classification of Function and Quality of Life and Well Being of Children with Disabilities and Their Families”
Dr. Robert Munn – “Seizures and Seizure Management”

Anti-Stigma and Mental Health Literacy
This year will see the implementation of 3 new Anti-Stigma programs in TDSB high schools. These programs have been identified by the Mental Health Commission of Canada anti-stigma initiative called “Opening Minds.” This is an initiative which is designed to change the attitudes and behaviours of students around mental illness. Opening Minds is the largest systematic effort undertaken in Canadian history to reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness.

The 3 programs that are being piloted in 39 TDSB high schools are: Talk to Youth Lately (10 schools), Stop the Stigma (24 schools) and The Jack Project (5 schools). These programs are being evaluated by researchers with goal of replicating the successful ones across the country.

Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy
Professional learning and training being provided by OT/PT Services:
**Back Care and Injury Prevention** - workshops for Educational Assistants, Child and Youth Workers, and Special Needs Assistants supporting students with Physical and Developmental disabilities.
**Clean, Intermittent Catheterization (CIC)** - for Educational Assistants
**Intermediate Cicker 5 for Low Incidence Programs** - for staff who are already using Cicker 5 with their students

**Board Wide Transition Fair** to take place at Drewry SS on April 19th
Services Statistics
January 2012

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SEAC Service Statistics Year to Date (January 2012)

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