

Draft Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes

April 3, 2012

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was convened at 7:07 p.m. on Tuesday, April 3, 2012, in the Boardroom, 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario, with Steven Lynette presiding.

The following committee members were present: Yama Arianfar, Diana Avon, Christina Buczek, Richard Carter, Paul Cross, Clovis Grant, Debra Hayden, Steven Lynette, Jean-Paul Ngana, Dayib Nur, Ginny Pearce, Phillip Sargent, Tammy Simon, Nancy Ann Turner Wright and Trustees John Hastings and Sam Sotiropoulos.

Regrets were received from Loris Bennett, Heather Breckenridge, Dr. Robert Gates, Olga Ingrahm, Gal Koren, and Trustee Howard Kaplan.

The following alternate members were present: Raegan Delisle, Nora Green, Wendy Huang, Sheelagh Hysenaj, Melissa Melnitzer, Judy Moir, Tina Shier and Bantyeahun Tezazu.

The following staff members were present: Cindy Burley, David Johnston, Elizabeth Mayhew and Denise Joseph-Dowers.

1. Approval of the Agenda

The following items were added under New Business:

- (a) Article in Toronto Sun dated April 3, 2012 re the Board's budget
- (b) Inner City Advisory Committee Special Education Ad Hoc Workgroup's Review of the Report, Special Education: Structural Overview and Student Demographics" (Dr. Rob Brown and Gillian Parekh, 2010)
- (c) Participatory Budget Reference Group Update

Christina Buczek moved: **That the agenda be approved as amended.**

The motion was carried

2. Declarations of Possible Conflict of Interest

None declared.

3. Election of Vice-chair

After reviewing the guidelines for the election of Chair and Vice-chair of the committee, as adopted December 1999, Steven Lynette invited nominations for the position of Vice-chair of SEAC for the period ending November 30, 2012.

The Chair advised that Trustee Kaplan indicated his interest in serving as Vice-chair for another term. There were no other nominations. Trustee Kaplan was acclaimed as Vice-Chair of SEAC for the term ending November 30, 2012.

4. Confirmation of the Minutes of March 5, 2012

Paul Cross moved: **That the minutes of the SEAC meeting held on March 5, 2012 be confirmed.** The motion was carried.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes of February 6, 2012

(a) Reports/Updates from Representatives on TDSB and other Committees[Page 2, Item 8]

Ginny Pearce reported on the work of the Participatory Budget Reference Group.

Following discussion, it was decided that the Chair of SEAC would write a letter to the Minister of Education with regard to the need to address the funding formula for students with special needs.

It was decided also that the Chair of the Budget Committee be invited to the next meeting of SEAC to address the impact of proposed cuts on Special Education students.

6. Trustees' Report

Trustee Hastings reported that:

- (a) A seminar on Special Education was recently held in his ward.
- (b) The Rotary Club of Toronto West hosted its 12th Annual Rotary Youth Impact Awards on January 27, 2012, during which Frank D. Selke was honoured. Mr. Selke is a television personality who has been an ardent fundraiser and ambassador for the Special Olympics in Canada.

7. Reports/Updates from Representatives on TDSB and other Committees

Staff shared a revised list of subcommittee members in effect from January 2012 for review.

(a) Special Education Report Subcommittee

The Special Education subcommittee will meet on May 7, 2012 during which a revised report will be shared.

(b) Facilitator Subcommittee

A meeting has been scheduled for May 7, 2012.

8. Correspondence received by the Chair

- (a) Email dated March 29, 2012 from Radmila Durdevic re Introduction letter and request to present to SEAC
- (b) Email dated March 29, 2012 from Janis Jaffe-White, Coordinator, Toronto Family Network re Request for contact information
- (c) Email dated March 28, 2012 from Phillip Sargent re Integra Spring Flyer
- (d) Email dated March 22, 2012 from Jasmin Dooh, LAMP Community Health Centre

- (e) Email dated March 19, 2012 from Cassie Bell, ICAC Co-ordinator re ad hoc' meeting of advisory committees regarding Special Education issues
- (f) Email dated March 18, 2012 from Clovis Grant re April 29th free workshop
- (g) Email dated March 9, 2012 from Tammy Simon on Student summer jobs postings (applicants with disabilities welcome)
- (h) Email dated March 9, 2012 from Christina Buczek on York region school board article
- (i) Email dated March 8, 2012 from Sybil Berenstein President of the Greater Toronto Chapter, Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada.

9. System Superintendent's Report

Cindy Burley presented a report (see page 5) to the Committee.

10. Professional Support Services Report

Dave Johnston presented a report (see page 7) to the Committee.

11. Local SEAC Association Reports

(a) Down Syndrome Association of Toronto

Richard Carter reported that March 21 has been declared World Down Syndrome Day.

(b) VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children

Paul Cross reported that on May 4, 2012 Dress Loud for VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children's Day will take place to raise awareness of hearing issues.

(c) Epilepsy Toronto

Steven Lynette reported that March 26, 2012 was Purple Day for Epilepsy International.

(j) Community Representatives

Christina Buczek reported on the brain series: Brain of the Autistic Student.

12. New Business

(a) Article in Toronto Sun date April. 3, 2012 re the Board's Budget

The committee discussed the article in the Toronto Sun newspaper, including its accuracy.

Following discussion, the following moved by Richard Carter was defeated:

Whereas, the TDSB has a number of schools operating under capacity as defined by the Ontario Ministry of Education, and

Whereas, the Ministry of Education will no longer help pay to keep under-enrolled schools open, and

Whereas, a number of the schools being identified as such have special education programs, serving students with special needs,

Be it resolved that the Board will give special consideration to all such schools to ensure the needs of students with special needs are met first as opposed to the application of a formula being the determining

factor for a decision regarding the closing of a school and advise the Ministry of Education accordingly, the reasoning for their decision to reflect the reality of the situation

The Chair undertook to write a letter to the Minister of Education to raise her awareness about Special Education.

The Chair undertook also to write to the Toronto Sun newspaper to point out the inaccuracies in the article dated April 3, 2012 re the Board's budget.

- (b) Inner City Advisory Committee Special Education Ad Hoc Workgroup's Review of the Report, Special Education: Structural Overview and Student Demographics" (Dr. Rob Brown and Gillian Parekh, 2010)

Clovis Grant provided an update on the review done and concerns expressed by the Inner City Advisory Committee Special Education Ad Hoc Workgroup on the report by Dr. Rob Brown and Gillian Parekh. It was suggested that a representative speak to SEAC regarding the report.

- (c) Futures Conference 2012

The Board's Futures Conference will take place on May 5, 2012. Those interested in participating should contact Steven Lynette or Elizabeth Mayhew.

Members are reminded to continue to send in promotional material for the public.

SEAC extended wishes for a speedy recovery to Karen Forbes, who was absent from the meeting.

13. Adjournment

At 9:23 p.m. Clovis Grant moved: **That the meeting be adjourned.**
The motion was carried.

Steven Lynette
Chair

System Superintendent SEAC Report
Submitted by Cindy Burley
April 3, 2012

Autism Awareness

April 2 was recognized as Autism Awareness Day across North America. There were many items in the media to inform the public about Autism, including an interview on CTV by Christina Buczek, one of our SEAC community representatives.

Many school-based activities were held throughout TDSB, all for the purpose of continuing to raise awareness, not only about Autism, but also to raise awareness of differences, in general. Central Autism Services will be celebrating Autism through the month of April with a variety of activities, including a poster contest.

Professional Development for School-based Staff

Over the past year and a half, 148 staff have completed a two-day certification program using the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). Staff continue to request this training and we hope to provide additional sessions next year.

On March 22, intermediate and secondary teachers from our Autism ISP classrooms met to develop and expand on best practices for transitioning between panels. A training session for all Autism ISP teachers is being planned for later in the spring.

Special Education Speaker Series

On March 21, staff from the Canadian Hearing Society presented an interactive, informative workshop entitled, *Barrier-Free Education for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students*. Information was provided in areas such as education, accessibility, technology, language and Human Rights Law on the Duty to Accommodate students with disabilities in the classroom and school environment. The use of both human resources and technological resources was modeled throughout.

With language at the crux of access to education for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, this workshop examined the language and attitudinal barriers that exist within schools and it provided information about how these barriers can be identified and removed.

Twenty participants attended, including regular class and special education teachers, support staff, central special education staff and administrators.

Survey Monkey: Secondary School IEP Practices

Secondary Schools have been asked to complete a Survey Monkey that requests information about the development and implementation of IEPs. The survey includes the following questions:

- Who is involved in the development of the IEPs?
- What processes are in place for the communicating and sharing IEPs?
- How are students supported to understand their IEPs?
- How are schools preparing students to advocate for the effective use of their IEPs?
- What are your best practices for the effective development and implementation of IEPs?

The results of the survey will be shared at the next SEAC meeting.

Behaviour Regional Services

This year, our behaviour itinerant teachers and child and youth workers have been part of a centralized Behaviour Regional Services. The team includes these staff, as well as both psychology and social work support. The BRS team provides support through classroom consultations, modeling of strategies in the classroom, team teaching, functional behaviour assessments, professional learning, supporting IEP and safety plan development and providing resources. Additional information can be found in the TDSB Special Education Report at the following link: http://www.tdsb.on.ca/_site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=10428&menuid=23230&pageid=20136

Use of Blockers

The recent article from Simcoe County has been brought to the attention of the Special Education Department, as well as concerns about whether blockers are being used within TDSB. Staff will follow up to determine if the blockers are in use and any related parent communication issues and report back to SEAC.

SEAC Report
Professional Support Services
April 3, 2012

Telepsychiatry Update

A partnership agreement has been signed with the Hospital for Sick Children: TeleLink Services to Schools Pilot Program that will enable TDSB staff to access four services through videoconferencing technology. The first two services provide direct and indirect services to students:

Clinical Consultation – videoconference interviews with students, families and TDSB staff with a psychiatrist or mental health specialist at HSC

Professional Case Conference – a consultation between a Professional Support Services staff and HSC TeleLink professionals around medical/psychiatric perspectives in assessment formulation, discussion of diagnosis and/or treatment planning

The other two services are directed at increasing the knowledge and skill of staff:

Program Consultations – TDSB staff who are involved in specific programs will be able to speak with an expert professional around issues related to their area of involvement

Training/Professional Development –there will be a number of training sessions available each year that will be of interest to a variety of staff groups

The first videoconference training session has been arranged. Dr. Umesh Jain will be conducting a 2 part series entitled, “Behaviour Problems in the Classroom”. This will be an interactive session taking place on April 10 and 17. A media launch is being planned by communications staff in both organizations and is scheduled for April 27.

Student Support Leadership Initiative

The TDSB is the host Board for this province-wide initiative funded by the Ministry of Education. The Student Support Leadership Initiative (SSLI) is a time limited project designed to engage staff from the TDSB, TCDSB, the agencies connected with the Ministries of Children and Youth, and Health and Long Term Care. It is intended to enhance access and co-ordination to mental health services for our children and families.

This year the committee has focused on supporting grass-roots, community-oriented projects that bring staff from different agencies and school boards together in the delivery of responsive mental health programs. In total, 16 projects received up to \$12,000 to fund their programs.

Examples of the programs that were approved include:

Building Resiliency Through Brotherhood (Development of a culture of acceptance and inclusion within the school that is supported by direct teaching of empathy and student leadership)

Where to Turn (To educate students about mental health and well-being and eliminating stigma by increasing awareness of skills/tools/resources available in the area)

WellNSS- Mental Health Matters at NSS (Strategies to gain insight and to alleviate anxiety, stress, depression and isolation)

The Inspired Lens (Using photography as a medium to engage students who have experienced violence)

A second focus for this year's activities was to build connections and communication among the different sectors involved in delivering mental health supports to children in Toronto. To that end, Dr. Philip Kendall, an internationally respected author, researcher and presenter in the area of "Anxiety" will be coming to Toronto for 5 days of training. Approximately 500 staff from Health, Children and Youth Services, Education, and Community agencies will be given large group instruction on this topic. Following that one day session, smaller groups organized by geographic area will meet with Dr. Kendall to focus on increasing understanding and developing pathways for students who are experiencing difficulties in this area.

Director's Leadership Series

On March 2, staff from Professional Support Services participated in the Program Support and Focused Intervention Director's Leadership series entitled, "Prevention and Intervention That Works!" We were pleased to host a wide range of TDSB staff from many different departments and were especially pleased to have more than 25 students participate in a number of presentations.

The goal of the session was to provide an overview of the services that we provide and the initiatives that staff are involved in to support students. Some examples of the workshops that were presented include:

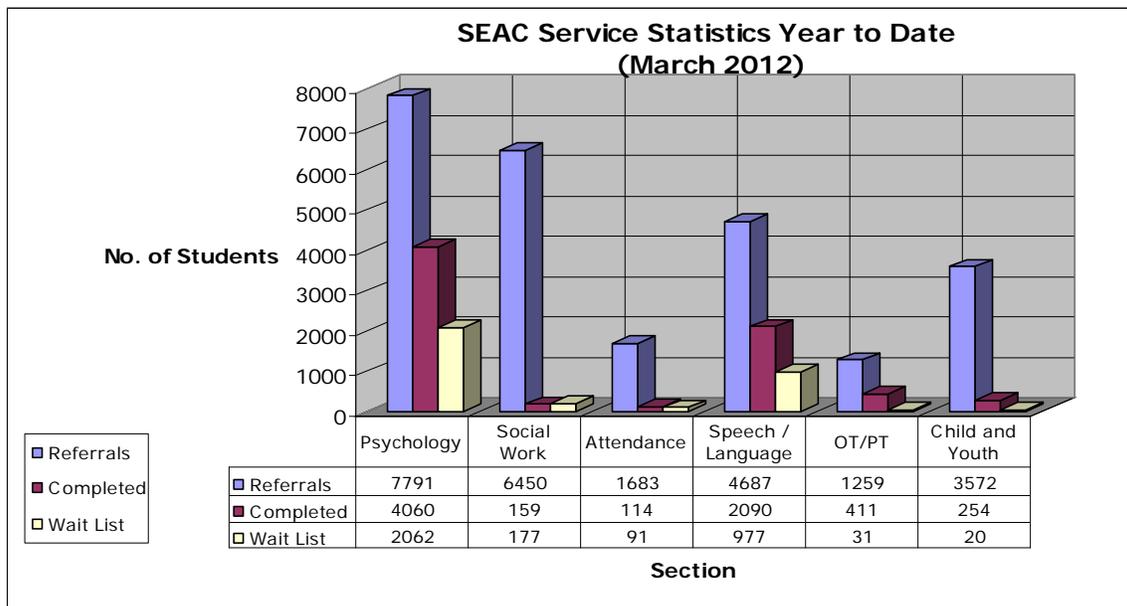
Unknown: Young Men Telling Stories of Depression and Resilience

Strength Based Resilience for Schools

Using Restorative Practice Circles to Get to the Point

Services Statistics March 2012

	Psychology	Social Work	Attendance	Speech / Language	OT/PT	Child and Youth Services
Referrals	7791	6450	1683	4687	1259	3572
Completed	4060	159	114	2090	411	254
Wait List	2062	177	91	977	31	20



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