

Draft Special Education Advisory Committee Minutes

May 7, 2012

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was convened at 7:01 p.m. on Monday, May 7, 2012, in the Boardroom, 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario, with Steven Lynette presiding.

The following committee members were present: Diana Avon, Ginny Pearce, Dr. Robert Gates, Clovis Grant, Heather Breckenridge, Steve Lynette, Gal Koren, Loris Bennett, Paul Cross, Olga Ingrahm, Christina Buczek, Dayib Nur, Nancy Ann Turner Wright, Debra Hayden and Trustee John Hastings.

Regrets were received from Richard Carter, Yama Arianfar, Phillip Sargent, Jean-Paul Ngana, Trustee Howard Kaplan and Trustee Sam Sotiropoulos.

The following alternate members were present: Elaine Dodsworth-Lever, Andrea Boulden, Nora Green and Najia Shafi.

The following staff members were present: Karen Forbes, Cindy Burley, David Johnston, Elizabeth Mayhew and Denisse Parra

1. Approval of the Agenda

Trustee Hastings 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 April 3, 2012

Diana Avon moved: **That the minutes of the SEAC meeting held on April 3, 2012 be confirmed.** The motion was carried.

4. Delegations and/Presentations

(a) 2012-13 Budget Process

SEAC received a presentation from Craig Snider, Comptroller of Budget, Revenue and Financial Reporting presenting information the 2012-13 Budget process.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes of April 3, 2012

(a) Blocker Shields

Karen Forbes reported that blockers shields are not being used in Toronto District School Board schools.

6. Letter to Parents re Students with Special Education Needs

Marilyn Lowe presented a series of letters for parents regarding students with Special Education needs that had been rewritten according to Board readability standards. Translations will be available.

7. Trustees' Report

Trustee Hastings reported that the Board's Futures Conference was held at the Allstream Centre from May 3-5, 2012.

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

(a) Special Education Report Subcommittee

Paul Cross reported that the Special Education Report Subcommittee met prior to today's SEAC meeting and reviewed a revised report, which will be shared with members.

(b) Facilitator Subcommittee

Clovis Grant reported that the Facilitator Subcommittee met prior to today's SEAC meeting.

Paul Cross reported that the Facilitator Subcommittee will be prepared to present a motion at next SEAC meeting.

9. Correspondence received by the Chair

- E-mail dated May 4 from Janis Jaffe-White and Reva Schafer, Toronto Family Network Correspondence regarding Query re access to TDSB occupational therapy support services for accommodations or SEAC claims
- E-mail dated April 30 from Janis Jaffe-White and Reva Schafer, Toronto Family Network Correspondence re the SEAC Minutes of April 3, 2012
- Letter received April 20, 2012 dated March 7, 2012 from SEAC Niagara District School Board to the Honourable Laurel Broten
- E-mail dated April 20, 2012 from Janis Jaffe-White, Toronto Family Network re IPRC Decision Form (addressed to Karen Forbes and cc to Steve Lynette)
- E-mail dated April 16, 2012 from Janis Jaffe-White, Toronto Family Network re SEAC members re correspondences not noted in SEAC minutes.

10. Senior Superintendent's Report

Karen Forbes presented a report (see page 4) to the Committee.

11. System Superintendent's Report

Cindy Burley presented a report (see page 9) to the Committee.

12. Professional Support Services Report

Dave Johnston presented a report (see page 12) to the Committee.

13. Local SEAC Association Reports

No matters to report.

14. New Business

Paul Cross extended appreciation to Elizabeth Mayhew for representing SEAC at FUTURES Conference on Saturday, May 6, 2012.

15. Adjournment

At 9:31 p.m. Paul Cross moved: **That the meeting be adjourned.**
The motion was carried.

**SENIOR SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MAY 7, 2012**

STAFF ALLOCATION

Staff Allocation rolled out at the beginning of April. Special Education was required to find savings of \$3 Million and approximately 27 programs with associated staff were reduced. As shared with SEAC, Mild Intellectual Disability programs, Behavioural programs and Learning Disability programs were the primary programs affected. As reported previously, the programs were reduced by consolidating programs that had traditionally had smaller numbers over the last few years. The number of most programs stayed status quo with the exception of additional autism programs being implemented.

For the 2012-13 allocation to primary/junior MID ISPs, the decision was made to change the level of support staff to reflect the increasing needs of some of the students in those programs. The Level I, Mild to Moderate EA role is to support programming in these classes. Recently, there has been an increase in students who require support for their moderate to severe needs, including self regulation, social and emotional needs, toileting and other personal care routines. Since the Mild to Moderate EA position does not include these duties, we have allocated, in the past, Level J Special Needs Assistants into these classes to support students with these moderate to severe needs. In order to address the trend of increasing needs in the MID ISP classrooms, the system standard for support staff in all Primary/Junior MID ISP classes for the 2012-2013 school year is Moderate to Severe Level J Educational Assistant. The level of support in Intermediate/Senior MID ISP programs is unchanged. A process has been worked out CUPE 4400 to minimize staffing disruption to schools resulting from the change in allocation.

As part of the special education department's staff allocation process for 2012-13, staff reviewed standards of support staff in secondary resource programs across the district. Educational Assistants (EAs) in secondary resource programs provide program support to students such as assistance to understand questions, organize work, stay on task, etc. The category of educational assistants that perform those functions are Level I (Mild to Moderate). Across three of the four quadrants, the standard has been that only Level I EAs are allocated to secondary resource. If there are needs that are more severe, support can be provided through a Level J Special Needs Assistant. During the review, it was recognized that Level J EAs are currently in the South East secondary resource programs. As we continue to ensure consistency across the district, we have moved this year to align the South East secondary resource programs to the system standard Level I EAs in all secondary resource programs. Should there be a need for increased support for students in a school's resource program, then that need will be reviewed and addressed

appropriately. A process has been worked out CUPE 4400 to minimize staffing disruption to schools resulting from the change in allocation.

IEP INTERNAL REVIEW

Results of recent consultations held by the Ministry on IEPs have shown that most district school boards are conducting their own internal IEP reviews. We have had five internal reviews since 2009 involving central special education staff, administrators, Marts, Secondary special education teachers, and IPRC chairs. In addition, FOS consultants assist with local school, IEP reviews.

The Ministry is building upon this practice as a basis for the 2011-2012 internal IEP review. The purpose of this review is to assess the progress made since the 2006-2007 Collaborative IEP Review in adopting the key elements of the 2000 IEP Standards. The Ministry is also asking boards to share effective practices that have contributed to their progress as well as any future activities planned to promote continuous improvement. The IEP Review will include students, parents and staff. The Ministry will produce and release a provincial trends report based on the results submitted by school boards, school authorities and provincial and demonstration schools. The results will inform next steps. The TDSB's review is being led by Marilyn Lowe who will be requesting participants for this process.

In September, the department will be reinstating the IEP/IPRC Parent survey that we conducted several years ago to gauge satisfaction with those two processes. SEAC did have an opportunity to see the survey and to comment on the questions. Research is supporting the process and will give regular reports back to SEAC.

THE FUTURES CONFERENCE

Over 2000 people attended the 3 day Futures Conference put on by the TDSB at the Airstream Centre. Special Education had a display table and featured Read and Write Gold, Empower, FastForWord and the iPad project at Beverley Street School. Special thanks to Ken Jinkinson, Christine Harvey-Kerr from Assistive Technology, Stacie Carroll from Beverley Street School, Rob Lines and Nicole Barnes from Yorkwoods Public School and West Glen Junior School respectively.

SEAC also had a table on Saturday at the conference and thanks to Elizabeth Mayhew who staffed the table so that parents could receive information.

Dr. Chris Spence gave the keynote address on Thursday morning, which can be found by [clicking here](#). Of particular interest to us in special education were his remarks what equitable and inclusive practices should look like in our classrooms for students with special education needs found on pages 14 – 30. He noted that research shows that an inclusive approach helps the development of all children in different ways, and he itemized the benefits of inclusion to both the students with special needs and those that

are typical. He used the results of the reduced exemption rates and increased grades 3 and 6 EQAO results to strengthen his belief that we have and continue to underestimate our students with special education needs. He shared his vision of a more inclusive educational model for students with special needs. Within two years he committed the TDSB to a vision that has:

Students with varying abilities working and learning together, supporting each other and valuing everyone's contribution in a more inclusive environment.

He ended with his personal commitment that

Together, we can and will make this vision a reality for all.

This marks the beginning of a potentially dramatic and exciting chapter in the delivery of special education in the TDSB in which SEAC will play a key and critical role. We will put this item on the June agenda for a fulsome discussion around the topic and the impact it will have on programming in the TDSB.

BLOCKER SHIELDS

Recently, there were media reports around the use of Blocker Shields in classes in the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) for students who have Autism Spectrum Disorder. Blocker shields are foam pads that can be used with students with risk of injury behaviour to ensure the safety of staff and students.

Schools have been surveyed by central staff to discover if blocker shields are being used. **Please be assured that Blocker Shields are not being used in our schools.** The use of a shield last year in one of our schools was discovered by central special education staff at the time and its use was terminated. There are procedures in place to ensure that any equipment that is used as a result of risk of injury behaviour is documented in the safety plan. Parents are expected to participate in the creation of the safety plan and a parental signature is required on every safety plan indicating that they are aware of the measures in place to ensure safety.

A system message has been distributed reiterating the TDSB position on Blocker Shields and reminding administrators of the procedures regarding use of equipment when required because of risk of injury behaviour.

SUMMER SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS WITH PHYSICAL, DEAF/HARD OF HEARING AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

We have changed our practice to a lottery system so that all students, including those with any developmental, deaf/hard of hearing and/or physical disability could apply to and be accepted to the summer program. A student who had severe and significant

disabilities and required very intensive support in addition to the classroom staff that we provide could not be accepted.

In recognition of all students' human rights, it was determined that this practice could not be continued and that all students had to be assured an equal chance to apply to the program. The fairest way to accomplish this was to have all applications entered into lottery (regardless of the severity of the student's disability). Parents/guardians were informed of this new application system before they applied for the program.

Because some students with severe disabilities were accepted through the lottery system, we had to ensure that the student – staff ratio was appropriate and we were not able to accept as many students as in past years and still provide quality, safe teaching and learning environments.

To support parents whose children were not accepted, summer schools administrators are making available to parents who have no alternate arrangements, contact information about summer programs that are run by the city and agencies such as Geneva Centre, Surrey Place and Community Living.

We will be reviewing all aspects of summer school at the conclusion of the program (as we do every year), including registration. Concerns will be brought forward and we will endeavour to improve our processes where we can.

FASTFORWORD AND EMPOWER—NEXT STEPS

FastForWord and Empower are two literacy programs that Special Education piloted last year and are in use in several other schools in our board. The research done to date reveals strengths and weaknesses in both programs. From soft and hard (from Empower) data, it appears that students did benefit from both programs. There will not be central funding for the programs at this time, but to further the implementation of the programs, Special Education did profile the two programs at the Futures conference. We are also in the process of producing a booklet profiling these two programs and others that schools may implement next year. A DVD has been made to profile the FastForWord program and will be available to principals. If there is time and interest, we will bring interested principals together to learn more about the programs.

SEA CLAIMS/TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

We have recently audited 300 individual computer claims and 400 interactive whiteboard Special Equipment Allotment (SEA) claims. These items are in process of being delivered before the end of the school year. There will be ongoing Learning Communities and professional development for whiteboard claims.

At the Association of Special Education Technology conference held in Toronto last week where the Ministry was present, there was consensus that school boards are not yet

able to implement iPad on a system wide scale using SEA funding. The issues that the TDSB (and other Boards) currently face are:

- Inability to track licensing with apps
- No technological support for apple iPads in the TDSB; maintenance becomes the school responsibility
- Individual teachers need to download the apps using credit cards; Apple not yet prepared to sell licences
- Inability to download apps on TDSB computers; has to be done at home by teachers
- Wireless technology is needed to run some of the apps but it's not widely available in TDSB and can't be purchased through SEA funding

We do have an iPad pilot occurring in the TDSB and Beverley Street School and others are using this technology, but at this point it is most successful as an individual school project rather than a system project. Our SEA claims coordinator is working with Apple to resolve some of the issues at their end such as licensing rites.

RETIREMENTS

A number of central staff is submitting their retirements, and I will share all the names with SEAC in June. I did want to share with you that I will be retiring as of August 31, 2012. It has been a privilege and an honour to work with the TDSB and the former North York Board of Education for the past 38 years. Of note has been my eight years in the special education department working with a strong and supportive central staff, dedicated school staff and, of course, SEAC. I look forward to the new adventures and challenges that retirement will bring, but I will hold my experiences here in my heart and memory.

System Superintendent
SEAC Report
Submitted by Cindy Burley

May 7, 2012

Professional Development for Special Education Teachers

Early Years Strategy - As part of the TDSB's Early Years Strategy, on April 23 and May 7, 10 special education kindergarten teachers participated in a 2-part professional learning session about transitions for kindergarten students. These teachers, from our Diagnostic Kindergartens and Kindergartens for Deaf/Hard of Hearing students participated in interactive sessions to determine best practices during transitions into school and to grade 1. The participants are using a framework which considers the different variables involved in good transitions, i.e. starting early, building communication and collaboration with all stakeholders, developing a plan, building continuity and capacity and then monitoring, evaluating and revising as needed. Staff from Surrey Place Centre presented their workshop entitled, Supporting the Kindergarten Experience, with a specific focus on best practices. The teachers have each developed an action plan to enhance the transition planning process at each of their schools, and their next steps will be supported by the staff from our Low Incidence Team.

Anxiety Workshop - On April 26, 14 FOS Special Education Consultants partnered with PSS staff in facilitating interactive sessions to support students with anxiety, particularly test anxiety. The interactive session provided opportunities to share best practices that can be used throughout the school day will all students, as well as some strategies that can be customized for individual students.

Essential Components of Programming for Students with Developmental Disabilities

On April 4, teachers and administrators from our programs for students with developmental disabilities participated in the rollout of our Essential Components of Programming for Students with Developmental Disabilities. The audience included our congregated sites, as well as a number of integrated locations, both elementary and secondary. School teams, along with Low Incidence Team members, engaged in a discussion and school self-reflection about areas of programming strengths at their schools and then identified areas requiring further development. Each school team created an Action Plan to follow during the rest of this school year and into the next year.

Special Education Department – Speaker Series

On April 10, staff from Surrey Place Centre presented a workshop titled, ‘Top Ten Research Achievements in Autism. This informative, interactive session included three important areas of research; prevalence, causes and intervention. The discussion of the research on causes of Autism was quite varied and included the latest twin and siblings research, genetic research, brain research as well as biological and environmental studies. The research on intervention strategies was presented according to 5 different research areas; self-management, sensory consideration, promoting social skills, curriculum, and reducing challenging behaviours.

Following the presentation of the research, there was an opportunity for further discussion and questions. Forty-five participants attended, including regular class and special education class teachers, support staff, central special education staff and administrators, as well as a trustee and superintendent.

ABA Principles, IEPs and Transitions for Students with ASD

Over the past five years, the TDSB has been implementing the directives from PPM 140. Resources and professional development have been delivered focusing on the areas of ABA Principles, IEPs and Transitions for students with ASD. Personalizing instruction, chunking information, collecting observation data, developing IEP goals and transition plans are all examples of ABA methods that are used in our schools. Professional development continues to be provided by the Special Education Department, School Support Program: ASD Consultants, Surrey Place Centre, Geneva Centre and the ASD Team. Sessions have been offered through one to one feedback and child specific reports, classroom, school and central sessions. "Connections, Supporting Seamless Transitions" for students leaving TPAS (Toronto Partnership Autism Services) and entering the TDSB is also based on the successful transfer of ABA methods.

All schools are required by the Ministry of Education to complete a survey that relates to the monitoring of PPM140. It will be used to provide a snapshot for the Ministry of Education of the implementation of ABA methods by school boards as of March 1, 2012. We will be collecting the data from each school. The results will be shared with SEAC at an upcoming meeting.

IEP Practices at Secondary Schools – Survey Monkey

As you may remember, we sent out a Survey Monkey for secondary schools to answer about their IEP practices. This particular information-gathering survey was for the schools only and as of May 7, 2012, 83 schools have responded. As well, we asked our Family of Schools consultants to answer the survey about secondary practices within their Family of Schools.

- Within the Secondary School Panel both the FOS Consultants and the Schools advised that the majority of people who are involved in the development of the IEP is the CL/ACL of Special Education (Schools 94.7% highly involved FOS

Consultants 100%); Special Education teachers and GLE teachers are highly involved. At the school level, 46% of schools indicated that subject teachers are moderately to highly involved.

- The processes that are in place for the communication of the IEP are as follows:
 - communicated electronically (SAP) - 70.3%
 - hard copy of the IEP - 61.3%
 - Master List of their students with an IEP - 97.5%
 - Summary of the IEP – 49.3%
 - Other methods: student information is also communicated at the IST/SST meetings; professional learning communities are also another vehicle in which IEP information and communication is shared.

- Student Advocacy – Schools identify that this is predominately handled by the Student-Special Education Teacher consultation meetings and in the Learning Strategies course (GLE). Some schools have introduced a Passport System where students have identified the type of learner they are and their strengths, needs and the supports they need.

SEAC Report Professional Support Services May 7, 2012

Occupational Therapy/Physiotherapy

May is National Physiotherapy month, and the theme this year is “Physiotherapy makes you stronger.” To celebrate the role of the Physiotherapist /Occupational Therapist in TDSB schools, you are invited to attend one of the “MEET, GREET & LEARN” sessions that are planned over the next three weeks (please see flyer).

The staff in Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy at the TDSB:

- Contribute specialized knowledge of physical and developmental disabilities and sensory integration disorders; interpreting medical health issues and their effect on learning; providing programming suggestions and curriculum/environmental modification and accommodations to ensure full participation and achievement of students
- Provide assessments/recommendations for Special Equipment Amount (SEA) claims for students with physical/health and developmental disabilities, fine, gross, sensory motor, and visual perceptual issues
- Support teachers in developing Individual Education Plans involving physical management/activities of daily living programming, oral motor function, meal time management, eating and equipment needs
- Participate on Toronto District School Board Committees
- Partner with Occupational Health and Safety Department to provide professional development for Educational Assistants and Special Needs Assistants in the use of equipment to ensure the safety of staff and students
- Provide opportunities for ongoing professional development for school administrators, teachers, support staff and parents
- Work in partnership with students, families, school staff, employers and community agencies, to assist in the transition process and planning for students with significant high needs physical and developmental disabilities and sensory integration disorders throughout the course of the students’ school life

Speech-Language Pathology

The month of May is Speech, Language and Hearing Awareness month. This year the focus is on “Noise in the Classroom.” There are significant connections between noise in the classroom and the impact it has on learning.

Our Speech-Language Pathologists at the TDSB:

- Contribute specialized knowledge and resources regarding the connections between communication, learning, literacy and social development
- Assess students’ communication skills in oral language, phonological awareness, related difficulties in literacy development, and functional social communication, working with interpreters and parents to distinguish second language issues (e.g., ESL, ESD) from language disorders
- Collaborate with teachers to develop effective classroom programming in oral language, literacy and social communication programming based on the curriculum according to Ministry of Education expectations
- Provide recommendations and resources for parents to support communication development at home

- Support teachers in developing communication goals for Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
- Participate in Kindergarten Early Language Intervention (KELI) Programs in 10 sites to provide early language, literacy and social programming for young at-risk children from high needs schools
- Offer professional development opportunities for teachers, parents and school staff
- Facilitate transitions for preschool children who have received community speech and language services and referrals of school age students for Community Care Access Services (speech therapy for voice disorders, articulation, stuttering)

Service Statistics April 2012

	Psychology	Social Work	Attendance	Speech / Language	OT/PT	Child and Youth Services
Referrals	8260	7267	2036	5124	1340	4609
Completed	4663	205	197	2847	506	355
Wait List	2059	162	99	934	25	22

