



Toronto District School Board
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee Name: **Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)**
Date: Monday, January 12, 2015
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Present: Diana Avon, Michelle Brick, Richard Carter, Aline Chan, Paul Cross, Deborah Fletcher, Trustee Tiffany Ford, Clovis Grant, Nora Green, Olga Ingrahm, Trustee Howard Kaplan, Steven Lynette, Philip Sargent, Cynthia Sprigings,
Staff: Uton Robinson, Anne Seymour, Jeff Hainbuch, Margo Ratsep
Guests: Ryan Stanga, Associate with Sheridan Consultants for a four-Ministry Special Needs Strategy
Recorder: Linda Mendonca & Margo Ratsep

ITEM	DISCUSSION	RECOMMENDATION/ MOTION
1. Call to Order/Quorum	A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was convened at 7:34 pm on Monday, January 12, 2015 in the Board Room, 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario with Michelle Brick presiding as Chair. Quorum was achieved at 7:34 pm.	
2. Approval of Agenda	Motion: Paul Cross moved that the agenda be approved as amended. All in favour	Motion carried.
3. Declaration of Possible Conflicts of Interest	None received.	
4. Confirmation of Minutes	Motion: Stephen Lynette moved that the minutes from December 8, 2014 be approved. All in favour.	Motion carried.
5. Delegations/Presentations	<p>Ryan Stanga, Associate with Sheridan Consultants for a four-Ministry Special Needs Strategy</p> <p>Purpose: Consultation on the integration and co-ordination of health services (Rehabilitation, OT/PT and S&L Services) for children with complex needs.</p> <p>In March 2013, the Ministries of Child and Youth Services, Education, Health and Long Term Care, and Community and Social Services came together to look at developing an integrated strategy for the coordination of services for children with complex needs. Mr. Stanga is working with two 'planning tables' developing this "Special Needs Strategy" – Coordinated Service Planning and Integration of Services for Toronto District. There is a fairly detailed work plan for each of the two tables to move forward. Members include community reps and organizations.</p>	

The March 2013 Report on Services for Children and Youth talked about the challenges of navigating special needs services and gaps in the current systems. It recognized opportunities for improving services to make them more timely, effective and coordinated. Mr. Stanga is seeking input from TDSB SEAC on what the challenges are, what's working well and what the future should look like in the two named planning areas. They will be putting together a concept paper for distribution to a variety of organizations, such as those on SEAC. The tables will be divided into task groups in March and April and will be engaging families and stakeholders using focus groups, interviews, and Town Hall meetings. The planning tables will come up with proposals for how to move forward. The main focus is on rehabilitation and OT/P/T for a fairly broad perspective of special needs.

Input from SEAC Members

- There is duplication of services. Better co-ordination of services and minimizing unnecessary duplication is important. For example, current processes to access a variety of services are not coordinated and often require duplication of assessments, with each service starting its own assessment process.
- Need for a 'case manager', such as a social worker, to coordinate communication, process requirements and service access for families.
- Need for clarity in communication with families. For example, when a doctor or school provides a report to a parent, the parent needs clear information about the available services and how to access those services.
- Some parents do not have the necessary knowledge or financial resources to navigate the system or access services in a timely way – physicians and school personnel need the appropriate information to be able to point parents in the right direction.
- Over time, there needs to be continual contact with the parents to let them know that the service access process is still active and what is next for the child. Parents can lose momentum if they do not have a good understanding of the service process timelines and deadlines.
- It's a very common occurrence that a report is not available when needed and everything bogs down. When assessments are done, parents need to know when the report will be available so they can mesh it with the process timeline.
- A checklist outlining the process flow would be helpful. School administrators are often information gatekeepers. They need to know and be encouraged to know about the myriad of services available and processes for accessing them.
- There needs to be caution when applying medical diagnoses and terminology in service application. For example, Autism Spectrum Disorder is a broad spectrum. Two children with ASD will not be alike or necessarily have the same needs. For example, some children with ASD need supports for language learning, others don't.
- Teachers are not trained to deliver some of the recommendations in reports. Teachers are not therapists. Often there are many, many recommendations to pick from and the choices can be overwhelming. For inclusion in the IEP, outcomes must be observable,

	<p>measurable and achievable. Teachers need to understand the frequency and duration of activity required for the student.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a need for an Alternative Curriculum for students who are developmentally delayed, such as for speech & language. Other provinces have developed province wide curriculum alternatives. Consider SLP support for language development. <p>What do people do now to find out where to go?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There needs to be coordination of an efficient path for communication of information to parents of children with complex needs, especially for preschool children. Right now, it seems to rely on word of mouth, other parents, special affiliations like Epilepsy Toronto, Learning Disabilities Association, etc., doctors and school personnel who are not fully informed about what is available or how to access supports. ▪ School administrators and staff can be overwhelmed with educational responsibilities, and are sometimes uninformed or unable to guide parents in the right direction. Clear pathways and resource information and adequate access to the necessary supports, are needed for addressing these kinds of issues, and the supports required. ▪ There is a need for a widely available list of service providers for different audiences, some kind of repository or directory of services and resources for parents to access ▪ Some form of triage is needed – to determine the timing and duration of services and develop a planned pathway. <p>***ACTION – Ryan Stanga to come back with the concept paper to present to SEAC.</p> <p>***ACTION - Margo to distribute to SEAC members Ryan’s contact information so they can send additional input to him directly.</p>	
<p>6. Open Discussion and Consultation</p>	<p>SEAC Calendar of Meetings (Margo Ratsep)</p> <p>A draft calendar of meetings was included in meeting packages. SEAC dates are planned as close as possible to PSSC meetings, since SEAC motions must go through that board committee. The February and December meeting dates need a decision. It is proposed that SEAC meet next on February 9th since SEAC cannot make motions to the Board, until new SEAC membership is appointed at the February 4th board meeting.</p> <p>***ACTION – February 9th is the next meeting. Margo Ratsep will tentatively book Boardroom for Dec 14th, to be confirmed by the new SEAC in February.</p>	

<p>7. Business Arising from the Minutes</p>	<p>1.) Communication Tracker (Nora Green) Nora has not received any Communication Tracker input from members. Without some kind of data collection tool to track parent concerns, it is difficult to know if issues are situation specific or systemic. This kind of information would also assist SEAC in advising about priorities for Special Education. The form has been shared with the PIAC working group, but a method for sharing the information is still to be worked out, since there is a new PIAC membership each year. ***Action: Margo will send the electronic version to Nora to simplify the form and re-issue. For use from January 30 – June 30 for data collection.</p> <p>2.) PIAC/SEAC Parent Conference Update (Clovis Grant, Margo Ratsep) A 2-pager based on meeting in December was included in meeting packages. Clovis is helping to organize the Marketplace participants & schedule. The flyer is still being drafted. Date is March 28th. The content is pretty much the same as last year's conference. Participants can attend 2 workshops in the morning and a Networking Q&A in the afternoon. The Marketplace is starting a little later at 10:00 am and includes staffed SEAC association information tables and other groups that support families. It is understood that all SEAC organizations are participating. The next planning meeting is Tuesday, January 20th. Volunteers are needed to co-facilitate workshops. ***Action Margo to distribute flyers electronically when finalized. ***Action: Margo to look into whether hard copies of the flyers can go into report cards.</p>	
<p>8. Trustee Reports and Follow-Up on Previous Action Items</p>	<p>Trustee Kaplan reported that a Board meeting was held in December, with a special meeting in January. The next regular Board meeting will be held on February 4th.</p> <p>Budget Process Consultation The first presentation of the budget will be provided at the Board meeting and SEAC consultation will begin at the February meeting. ***Action: Margo will follow up with Craig Snider regarding the budget presentation, requesting a focus on Special Education with as much specific information on how dollars are spent as is possible. SEAC is interested in specifics such as numbers of ISP classes, teachers, EA's, etc. SEAC would also like the presentation ahead of time so more time can be spent on discussion and consultation. SEAC would also like to know the critical dates for input to the board on budget so consultations can be planned in a timely way.</p>	
<p>9. Reports/Updates from Active SEAC Subcommittees</p>	<p>None noted.</p>	
<p>10. Special Education Department Updates</p>	<p>Special Education Department Updates (Uton Robinson, Anne Seymour, Jeff Hainbuch)</p>	

	<p>Uton Robinson gave an oral report (See page 6 for a synopsis)</p> <p>Following his report, questions were raised about returning Section 23 students.</p> <p>Uton explained that Section 23 students are transitioning back to TDSB schools at various times within the school year. He spoke to the challenges that can arise, including the changing profile of the students being served as well as the high turnover of staff. Sometimes the reasons for their return are related to agency funding issues. Given their reduced resources, they are no longer able to continue to provide the needed supports. As a result we have to look carefully at the issues of risk management, environmental impacts, transportation and student and staff safety. Safety is always a first priority. The environment must be one that is going to be safe and supportive.</p>	
11. Correspondence Received by the Chair	<p>The SEAC Chair received the following correspondence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Letter dated December 4, 2014 to Michelle Brick from Tracey MacCharles, Minister of Children and Youth Services in response to TDSB SEAC letter about School Health Support Services 2. Letter dated December 11, 2014 to Michelle Brick from Liz Sandals, Minister of Education in response to TDSB SEAC letter about School Health Support Services 	
12. New Business	<p>Diana Avon informed SEAC about the Association for Bright Children Conference to take place on Saturday, February 21st at Humber College.</p>	
13. Agenda Setting for Future Meetings	<p>Agenda Setting for Future Meetings</p> <p>February 2015</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2015. Uton will begin the meeting until the election is completed. 2. Budget Consultation 3. Clovis Grant – motion on system process for SEAC consultation 4. Concussion Policy and Procedures <p>Upcoming Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technology Strategy, Sense of Belonging Research, Refusal to Admit, Mental Health Strategy, Special Education Support Staff ▪ Member Presentations: BIST, Down Syndrome Association <p>Michelle Brick expressed that it has been a privilege working with SEAC, thanked members for their work, and wished the committee all the best for 2015.</p>	
14. Adjournment	<p>***Motion: Aline moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. All in favour.</p>	Motion carried.

Next Meeting Date: February 9, 2015

Uton Robinson – Special Education Department Update

Section 23 – Care, Treatment, Custody and Correctional Programs

The TDSB Section 23 Programs serve students who, for a variety of reasons, require their educational needs to be met outside of the regular school system in specialized settings. At a recent meeting with one of our agency partners, concern was raised about the increasingly complex and challenging profiles of students being referred to Section 23 programs. They are seeing more students being referred to section programs who require significant levels of ongoing support and resources in order to meet their education, safety and treatment needs. We will continue to have discussions with our agency partners about how we can work together to meet the needs of these students.

Individual Education Plan Update

At this time there are 48,473 IEPs in progress across the TDSB. Of those students, 20,998 have not gone through an IPRC. We are looking at the possible need for greater clarity around steps that can be taken through the IST/SST process prior to IEP development and implementation. In general, we need to review the strategies used in supporting students and develop a list of steps that can take place without an IEP being developed.

Identification, Placement and Review Committee Meetings

In reference to the tracker, we receive a number of comments around IPRC's and what takes place at those meetings. There are expectations around how IPRC meetings are conducted. For example, prior to an IPRC, school staff should ensure that the purpose of the meeting is clear to parents, the meeting space is organized, that translation is available and parents understand their involvement. The IPRC should engage parents in conversation, where there can be questions, where we start with the strengths, speak supportively and not pressure or intimidate. The Parents' Guide to Special Education document needs to be shortened and the language needs to be parent friendly to ensure parents understand the process fully.

Inclusion Strategy Update

Inclusionary Education is the belief that all students in a community, including those with special learning needs, should receive their education to the fullest extent possible in the local community. This aligns with Ontario Regulation 181/98 S17 (1) which guides IPRC decision-making around regular class placement for students with special needs (Special Education Plan 2014 p. 7).

At this time, focus is being given to a consideration of changing conditions of learning for our youngest students in Grades 1 – 3 through an inclusionary delivery of special education services.

To date, the implementation process included the following:

- Research review on the impact of inclusion for students, in particular students ages 6-8 years, with and without special needs;
- Presentations and updates on the Inclusion Strategy and Implementation Actions to Academic Council and Executive Council for approval;
- Working with various TDSB departments including Business Services, Employee Services, Planning;
- Design actions and supports for the implementation process with staff of Special Education Department, specifically addressing professional learning and an inclusion service delivery to schools;
- Presentations at Staffing Allocation Committee to ensure timelines on staffing are met in the event of staff re-assignments as a result of implementation;

- Consultation with Senior Team, SEAC, TSAA and CUPE;
- Regular and timely updates to all Superintendents of Education;
- Presentations will take place at February Family of Schools' Leadership Team Meetings;
- Updates to Principals through written communication and face-to-face meeting at Area Principals meetings; and
- Revision to the timeline for IPRC Review meetings with all parents of affected Grade 1 – 3 students.

We are in the process of conducting IPRC Reviews for parents of Primary children with Learning Disabilities, Mild Intellectual Disabilities and Behaviour Identifications. Through this process, parents' decision is key and central to the actual, number of students that will be placed in an inclusionary learning environment. The IPRC Review process will also enable us to place appropriately students into their neighbourhood school for the next school year, if it is determined that the placement will improve their academic and socio-emotional outcomes.

Toronto Area Region Office – (Edu-Gains)

There is a new Ministry website called Edu-Gains for educators and parents. The Ministry developed resources include a special education focus. For example, it offers samples of IEPs, information on PPM 8 on program planning and other information that SEAC members may find useful.

In closing, Executive Superintendent Robinson thanked Michelle Brick for the strong knowledge and organizational skills she brought to SEAC during her term as Association Representative for Learning Disabilities Association of Toronto District and as SEAC Chair.