



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

**Meeting Date:** 13 September 2021

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee convened on September 13 at 7:00 pm through electronic means. Steven Lynette chaired the meeting. The meeting was live-streamed on the TDSB website.

Association for Bright Children (ABC)		Melissa Rosen
Autism Society of Ontario – Toronto		Lisa Kness Alt - Julie Diamond
Black Parent Support Group		Tracey Burrell
Community Living Toronto		Tracy O’Regan
Epilepsy Toronto		Steven Lynette
Down Syndrome Association of Toronto		Richard Carter
Easter Seals Ontario		Aliza Chagpar
Integrated Action for Inclusion (IAI)		Tania Principe
IEWS for the Visually Impaired		David Lepofsky
VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children		Shanna Lino
Learning Disability Association		Nadia Persaud
CADDAC		Juanita Beaudry
LC1	Aline Chan	Nora Green
LC2	Jordan Glass	Jean-Paul Ngana
LC3	Olga Ingrahm	Kirsten Doyle
LC4	Diane Montgomery	Izabella Pruska-Oldenoff Alt - George Petrovic
TDSB Trustees	Alexander Brown	Michelle Aarts

Also present were:

Andrew Gold, Associate Director, Special Education  
Angela Nardi-Addesa, System Superintendent, Special Education and Inclusion  
Janine Small, Centrally Assigned Principal, BLV, ASD and Assistive Technology/SEA Claim  
Andrea Roach, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education LC4  
Effie Stathopoulos, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education LC1  
Susan Moulton, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education LC2  
Jennie Petko, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education LC 3  
Wendy Terro, Centrally Assigned Principal, Special Education and Inclusion, The Arts, Math, Science/STEM and Robotics  
Elizabeth Shaeffer Education and Community Partnership Program:  
Mun Shu Wong, Media Services,  
Lianne Dixon, SEAC Liaison

## **Part A: Recommendations**

### **SEAC Black Parents Support Group**

The Special Education Advisory Committee recommends Clovis Grant to be the alternate member representing the Black Parent Support Group (see Appendix B).

The alternate member, Fletcher Matandika, has resigned.

## **Part B: For Information Only**

A motion was passed supporting the submission from the Toronto District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee to the K-12 Education Standards Development Committee to the Ministry as feedback from SEAC. (Appendix A)

### **Leadership, Learning and School Improvement Department Reports and Updates:**

#### **New and Returning Centrally Assigned Principals were introduced to SEAC.**

Education and Community Partnership Program: Elizabeth Shaeffer

BLV, ASD and Assistive Technology/SEA Claim: Janine Small

Special Education and Inclusion, The Arts, Math, Science/STEM and Robotics - Wendy Terro (.25)

Learning Centre 1: Effie Stathopoulos

Learning Centre 2: Susan Moulton

Learning Centre 3: Jennie Petko

Learning Centre 4: Andrea Roach

#### **Special Education Virtual Selection Summary as of September 9, 2021**

The numbers of students in ISP classes were shared with SEAC (Appendix C)

Elementary ISPs (other than Gifted) will proceed with simultaneous learning for students who have selected virtual learning. Elementary Gifted classes are larger and have one teacher assigned. Secondary ISPs (including Gifted) will proceed with simultaneous learning for students who have selected virtual learning and remain connected to their homeschool.

#### **Summer School**

This summer we hosted approximately 350 students in five virtual school sites. Programs included Physical Disability classes Grades 1 to 8, Deaf Hard of Hearing classes Kindergarten to 8 and Developmental Disability classes Grades 1 to 12.

Learning was facilitated through sensory kits that TDSB provided to all students. CYW staff members offered weekly drop-in sessions focusing on social skills and self-regulation to each team for a total of four sessions per week.

#### **Special Education Staff Organization**

The Staff Organizational Chart was shared with SEAC (Appendix D)

This chart reflects a significant increase in the number of staff working in schools.

### **Special Education Plan Feedback**

We are developing a form that will help streamline the receiving of feedback to the Special Education Plan. This google form was shared in draft form with SEAC.

In addition, at each month's SEAC meeting, time will be devoted to one section of the Special Education Plan to both discuss and receive feedback.

### **TDSB Service Excellence Survey for SEAC**

- The TDSB's Service Excellence Program is designed to improve work culture and foster relationships that are client-focused, responsive and efficient
- Special Education and Inclusion developed a survey which aims to provide feedback to staff on their level of service to SEAC during the previous school year and possibly identify gaps that can be addressed.  
[SEAC Service Excellence Survey \(qualtrics.com\)](https://www.qualtrics.com)

### **Universal Screening-Online**

Future Universal Screening-CCAT 7 testing will now be administered online. Staff training will occur in late September and testing will occur in mid-October.

### **Part C: Ongoing Matters**

Subcommittees were announced and members volunteered to join for the 2021/22 year.

**Report Submitted by:** Lianne Dixon

## **Appendix A**

September 10, 2021

# **SUBMISSION BY THE Toronto District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee TO THE K-12 Education Standards Development Committee**

## **1. Who Are We?**

The Special Education Advisory Committee of the Toronto District School Board presents this feedback to the K-12 Education Standards Development Committee on its initial report and recommendations. TDSB is Canada's largest school board. Its student body includes in the range of 50,000 students with special education needs. Our SEAC is appointed under Ontario regulations to advise the TDSB on issues relevant to special education.

TDSB's SEAC has been working hard for several years to get TDSB to substantially improve its educational and program offerings for the students who fall within SEAC's mandate. From our experience, there is substantial room for improvement of the accessibility of education for students with disabilities. There is a pressing need for the Ontario Government to lead in this area, by enacting a strong and effective Education Accessibility Standard.

## **2. Our Overall Feedback**

We congratulate the K-12 Education Standards Development Committee on its initial report. We support the report and its recommendations. We do not want to see any of them removed, reduced or diluted in the final report that the K-12 Education Standards Development Committee will eventually submit to the Ontario Government. We also do not want to see any of the proposed timelines shortened.

We here make a few additional points and ask for a few additions.

## **3. Do Not Leave It to Each School Board to Have to Figure Out How to Achieve Accessibility**

Right now, the Ministry of Education largely leaves it to each school board to figure out how accessible to become for students with disabilities and how to get there. This places a massive

and unfair burden on each school board. It also burdens parents and SEACs to have to each do the same advocacy work, over and over, board after board, and school after school.

We ask the Standards Development Committee to emphasize that the Government must set strong, clear, comprehensive and specific and detailed standards for accessibility under the AODA. School boards need to know what to do. Parents need to know what to expect. The clearer and more specific they are, the more effective and helpful they are.

What a student with disabilities receives from their school board should not arbitrarily vary from one school board to the next.

It is not sufficient for the Education Accessibility Standard to require each school board to create a policy or plan to address an issue. That leaves it to each board to have to figure out what that policy or plan will include. It does not assure any consistency around Ontario. Moreover, we have had a great deal of experience with a Government or school board having a good policy on an issue, without that policy turning into a real practice on the front lines.

#### **4. The Out-Dated and Pejorative Term "Exceptionality"**

It is especially important for the old term "exceptionality" to be removed, and for all disabilities to be covered. For example, leaving out conditions like ADHD hurts students and helps no one.

#### **5. Regularly Bring Together Senior School Board Management to Address Disability Issues**

To help build this consistency, the Ministry of Education should regularly bring together superintendents and other senior board management from across Ontario to share practices and collectively learn from guest speakers, including those from the disability sector, on how to most effectively serve students with disabilities.

#### **6. Making SEACs More Effective**

We have found that a SEAC can spend a great deal of time giving advice, without ever finding out how much, if at all, that advice turns into action at the school board. There should be a requirement for a school board to report back to a SEAC on what action if any, it took on advice

given by the SEAC. Where action is not taken, the board should be required to give reasons to the SEAC for not doing so.

Several years ago, the Ministry of Education held a helpful conference for SEAC members from around Ontario. It is essential for there to be another such conference, and for it to occur every year or every two years. The content of the program should be controlled by SEAC members and not by the Ministry. With the advent of Zoom, it would be easy to arrange this at a far lower cost, as a virtual conference. The same should be provided for school board Accessibility Committees.

## **6. Provincial Templates Needed for all Required Training and curriculum**

In each case where the Standards Development Committee recommends that there be training or professional learning at school boards, the Ministry of Education should be required to produce models of this training, which a school board can use if it wishes.

There is a pressing need for a provincial curriculum on accessibility and full participation for people with disabilities. This should not be left to each school board to invent. The Ministry should provide a provincial curriculum on which school boards can build if they wish. This curriculum should include the AODA, the Charter and human rights legislation, the experience of people with disabilities facing barriers in society, and the intersectionality that can be experienced by those who have disabilities and who are poor and/or from racialized or other equality-seeking communities.

Similarly, anti-black racism curriculum should include an element on the intersectionality of disability and race and the double disadvantage that can be experienced by racialized students with disabilities.

## **7. Mandatory Training for New School Staff**

There should be a specific requirement for disability inclusion, accessibility and full participation training for any new employees as they start to work at a school board. This should be a mandatory part of the "onboarding" of new employees, and especially those who teach students or deal with families.

## 8. Creating System Navigators for Students with Disabilities and their Parents

Bigger school boards should be provided system navigators for special education and funding for accessibility offices – someone specifically to help parents – Special Education AODA Navigator.

For parents to have someone appointed to work with them rather than having to turn to paid advocates. Someone to help them navigate the system – like a case manager. The Ministry of Education should provide a template for training these system navigators. The system navigators should provide aggregated feedback on the recurring barriers that students with disabilities face to the school board's senior management, SEAC and Accessibility Committee, and trustees, to be made public.

## 9. Service Animals During an Emergency

The Education Accessibility Standard should require specific elements be included in emergency planning on procedures for students with service animals to ensure their safety.

### Appendix B

#### Membership

Sherron Grant, President of BPSG has nominated Clovis Grant as Alternate Association Representative. This nominee meets the criteria outlined by Regulation 464/97 for membership.

### Appendix C

#### In-Person and Virtual Learning Updates

Special Education Virtual Selection Summary as of September 9, 2021

<b>Program</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Virtual</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>In-Person</b>
ASD	604	61	10	543
BEH	245	21	9	224
DHH	132	13	10	119
DD	1,434	183	13	1,251
DK	329	9	3	320

Gifted	3,165	260	8	2,905
LD	313	33	11	280
MID	686	118	17	568
PD	73	6	8	675

## Appendix D

### Special Education Staff Organization

Year	Executive Superintendent	System Superintendent	Centrally Assigned Principals and Vice-Principals	Coordinators and Consultants
2019-present	0	1 (Angela Nardi-Addesa)	5 CAPs (Central, 4 LCs) 1 CAP, 4 VPs (ECP)	13 Coordinators 50 Consultants
2018-2019	1 (Brendan Browne)	1 (Vicky Branco)	5 CAPs (Central, 4 LCs) 1 CAP, 4 VPs (ECP)	21 Coordinators 39 Consultants
2017 - 2018	1 (Uton Robinson)	4 SOEs (Spec Ed Coordination added to their school portfolios)	5 CAPs (Central, 4 LCs) 1 CAP, 4 VPs (Section Programs)	21 Coordinators 39 Consultants
2014 - 2017	1 (Uton Robinson)	3 (Ian Allison, Jeff Hainbuch, Anne Seymour)	2 CAP, 4 VPs (East, West) 1 CAP, 4 VPs (Section Programs)	22 Coordinators 22 Consultants
Till 2014	1 (Sandy Spyropoulos)	1 (Cindy Burley)	3 CAPs, 4 VPs (Central, East, West) 1 CAP, 2 VPs (Section Programs)	24 Coordinators 31 Consultants