

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: November 26, 2018
 Time: 7:00 pm
 Location: Catholic Education Centre - Board Room
 802 Drury Lane
 Burlington, Ontario

Members Present	B. Agnew (Chair)	H. Karabela
	R. Barreiro	M. Lourenco
	L. Currie	R J. Parisi
	D. Hotopeleanu	R. Quesnel
	A. Iantomasi	D. Rabenda

Staff Present

C. Cipriano, Superintendent of Special Education Services
 W. Reid-Purcell, Special Education Coordinator
 A. Bator, Special Education Consultant
 V. Goodwin- Duncan, Special Education Consultant
 L. Keating, Chief Officer Research and Development

Members Excused

L. Cipparrone
 L. Stephenson

Members Absent

K. Bivand
 C. Parreira
 S. Trites

Recording Secretary J. Crew

1. Call to Order
 The Chair called the meeting to order.

1.1 Opening Prayer
 The meeting opened at 7:02 p.m. with a prayer led by the Chair.

1.2 Approval of Agenda
Moved by: J. Parisi
Seconded by: R. Quesnel
RESOLVED, that the agenda be accepted as received. *CARRIED*

2. Staff Presentation re: Delegation to the Board
 The Chair welcomed L. Keating, Acting Chief Officer Research and Development.
 C. Cipriano explained the purpose of the presentation was to answer concerns that had been raised; speak to gaps in the November 20th 2018 *Gifted Student Survey Results* delegation to the Board; and ensure SEAC's voice is heard moving forward.

C. Cipriano, Superintendent Special Education Services, L. Keating, Chief Officer Research and Development; and W. Reid-Purcell, Special Education Coordinator presented staffs' response. A copy of the presentation is attached.

2.1 Staff Presentation re: Delegation to the Board

Moved by: A. Iantomasi
Seconded by: R. Quesnel

RESOLVED, that the staff presentation re: delegation to the Board be provided to the new Board of Trustees as information for their review, to help inform future decisions and to provide information on the role and mandate of the Special Education Advisory Committee.

The Chair called for a vote and the motion *CARRIED*.

A proposed statement regarding an official notice from ABC Ontario was directed, due to the nature of the allegations, to be submitted to the Board as a formal letter from ABC Ontario.

3. Actions to be taken

3.1 Minutes of the November 12, 2018 5:30 pm SEAC Meeting

Moved by: D. Rabenda
Seconded by: D. Hotopeleanu

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the November 12, 2018 SEAC Meeting be approved as presented.

The Chair called for a vote and the motion *CARRIED*.

3.2 Minutes of the November 12, 2018 7:00 pm SEAC Meeting

Moved by: R. Quesnel
Seconded by: D. Rabenda

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the November 12, 2018 SEAC Meeting be approved as amended.

The Chair called for a vote and the motion *CARRIED*.

4. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

5. Business Arising from Previous Meetings

Review of SEAC Soundbytes: samples were distributed of SEAC Soundbytes, a proposed tentative schedule was agreed upon:

December: Students with Special Needs and the Christmas Holidays

January: World Down Syndrome Day (Halton Down Syndrome Association)

February: Mental Health and Special Education

March: Transition Planning

April: What is VOICE?

May: Challenging Behaviour (Autism Ontario)

June: Special Education Guide (J. Parisi to draft)

6. Action and Information Items

6.1 SEAC Discussion Items (B. Agnew)

B. Agnew discussed a request at the November meeting for a SEAC discussion item to be added to the agenda. It was noted that it was unclear if this was a onetime request or a request for a standing item moving forward. M. Lourenco responded that her request was for a standing item.

Members discussed **adding 'SEAC Discussion' as a standing agenda item**. Discussion included a review of the reasons for previously removing this as a standing item. Members concluded that 'SEAC Discussion' items would be added to agendas, on an as needed basis.

It was determined that SEAC Discussion items to be added to agendas be submitted 10 days prior to the SEAC meeting, in conjunction with Association, Sub-Committee and Communication Reports. Sufficient time will be allocated on agendas accordingly.

6.2 SEAC Webinar Preparation (B. Agnew)

Members agreed to table the webinar preparations for now and provide the new SEAC Committee with the information prepared to date. Members were invited to add any additional information, they felt was relevant, to the PowerPoint presentation that had been sent out after the November meetings.

7. Communications to SEAC

7.1 **Superintendent's Report**

C. Cipriano provide updates on:

ILAUGH Workshop: a Deaf Hard of Hearing teacher and a Speech Language Pathologist attended a workshop on the ILAUGH social thinking intervention model. Staff learned about the skills and concepts an individual must process to have successful social interactions and engage in effective social communication. (Each letter of ILAUGH represents one of the six key areas of the framework.)

FASD Awareness Project: is being piloted at St. Christopher with student ambassadors; activities include learning about different exceptionalities

Highlights from SEA: putting Board Maker activities on student IPADs to replace some physical file folders; using the smart boards for morning routines (calendar, weather) as well as other activities to practice life skills; creating google docs for students who participate in co-op so that they can share reflections with both their parents and teachers; first issue of SEA Breeze Newsletter has been released

York/Osgoode Hall: On Thursday, October 11th, our Special Education Consultants, Coordinator and C. Cipriano attended the annual Osgoode Hall Legal Issues in Special Education

Parent Information Meeting for Students with Special Needs Entering the Kindergarten Program: will be held on Wednesday, February 13, 2019 at St. Benedict CES in Milton

Advertisement inviting additional Special Education Associations to nominate individuals to sit on SEAC: went out in the Metro Land newspapers this past Thursday; the communication also included a request for community members at large to self-nominate

7.2 Trustee Reports

D. Rabenda reported that the new Board of Trustees begins on December 1st, the inauguration will take place on Tuesday December 4th at Jean Vanier Catholic Secondary School.

H. Karabela noted that she put forth the motion for transportation for Gifted; going forward she will be happy to see motions put forward; five out of nine trustees voted in favour of the motion.

A. Iantomasi added that J. Crowell, former Principal St. Catherine of Alexandria CES in Georgetown, has been appointed as Superintendent of Education, School Services.

8. Next Agenda: Meeting Monday, January 28, 2019

The agenda will include SEAC Training and Orientation for the 2014-2018 SEAC Committee.

9. Adjournment

9.1 Resolution re Absentees (Chair)

Moved by: L. Currie

Seconded by: D. Hotopeleanu

RESOLVED, that L. Cipparrone, L. Stephenson be excused. CARRIED

9.2 Adjournment and Closing Prayer (Chair)

Moved by: L. Currie

Seconded by: A. Iantomasi

RESOLVED, that the meeting adjourn. CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m. with a prayer led by the Chair.

The Chair noted that L. Cipparrone passed on heartfelt thanks to SEAC.

B. Agnew expressed her thanks to everyone.

R. Quesnel thanked B. Agnew for her leadership.

Staff Response to Delegation to the Board

The Education Act

Ontario Regulation 464/97: Special Education Advisory Committees

11. (1) A special education advisory committee of a board may make recommendations to the board in respect of any matter affecting the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the board.

(2) Before making a decision on a recommendation of the committee, the board shall provide an opportunity for the committee to be heard before the board and before any other committee of the board to which the recommendation is referred.
O. Reg. 464/97, s. 11.



Special Education Plan (SEP)

O. Reg. 464/97 12. (1) The board shall ensure that its special education advisory committee is provided with the opportunity to participate in the board's annual review, under Regulation 306 of the Revised Regulations of Ontario, 1990, of its special education plan

- SEP is reviewed annually by SEAC
- SEP, as directed by the Ministry, is submitted for their review annually, by July 31st of each year
- Submission is part of a report that includes a check list identifying areas that have been amended; the report is signed by the Director of Education
- As agreed upon by SEAC (some years ago) the plan is no longer submitted in hardcopy; a link to plan, as posted on the website, is submitted
- Boards can take 2 years to do a complete review of the Special Education Plan



Research Data at HCDSB: The Gifted Student Survey

Achieving Believing Belonging

The 2018 Gifted High School Student Survey: A representative sample

- 241 students in high school, identified as gifted, were invited to participate
- 194 completed the survey (24 IB, 109 regular academic, 61 AP)
- Response rate: 80.5%
- With an estimated margin of error of 4%, Confidence interval around responses is 99%, meaning we are 99% certain that the true value is reflected in these results, with a margin of error of 4%
 - 7% found course work not challenging, margin of error is up to 11%
 - 80% in AP were satisfied/very satisfied, MoE is as low as 76%
- Therefore, the results of the survey are **REPRESENTATIVE** of high school gifted students



The 2018 Gifted High School Student Survey: Withholding results

- 2017-18 school year: RADS sent out 27 surveys involving parents and/or students
 - None of the results were widely disseminated to parents (to the best of my knowledge)
- The HCDSB does not have a policy for sharing research results with parents
- This is NOT the same as withholding data



The 2018 Gifted High School Student Survey: Results of open-ended questions

- 194 rows, 6 columns with open-ended questions
- 53 responded as to why they would consider a gifted program
 - 27 (51%) indicated social reasons, 35 (66%) indicated a desire for better programming
- 102 responded as to why they would NOT consider a gifted program
 - 62 (61%) indicated social reasons, 33% indicated they were happy at their school and/or did not see a benefit to switching
 - 8 (8%) indicated it was too late and may have considered in elementary school
 - Workload (7%) and travel (9%) were other reasons
- 172 responded to what they liked most about their program
 - 53 (31%) indicated it met their learning needs
 - 47 (27%) indicated social reasons
 - 28 (16.3%) indicated variety of course options
 - 7 (4%) indicated it was easy to get good marks; 6 (3.4%) said nothing
- 156 responded to what they liked LEAST about their program
 - 31 (20%) indicated poor course selection (including 17 IB respondents)
 - 26 (16.7%) indicated their learning needs were not being met (a wide variety of reasons were specified)
 - 15 (9.6%) found the workload too hard; 14 (9%) reported it too slow/easy
 - 17 (11%) responded there was nothing they didn't like



The 2018 Gifted High School Student Survey: Quantitative data

- 25% (49) indicated that they were not challenged by curriculum
- Peers help me learn: 51% agreed or strongly agreed; only 15% disagreed (66 neutral, 29 disagree)
- Why would you choose a gifted program: 50% stated social reasons (e.g. like minded peers, socially beneficial)
- Results suggest that overall: social factors are strong drivers of choice across all programs
- Students are satisfied with their program options
- Lack of selection the most consistent complaint
- Learning needs not being met covered a large variety of issues – no consistent pattern



Conducting Research at the HCDSB

- Research must comply with our board policies and the Tri-Council Policy Statement for ethical research in humans (TCPS2)
 - **There must be a clear and measurable benefit to participants and/or students**
- Surveys are designed to be easy to understand and analyze, with straightforward questions and answers
 - Questions and responses based on widely studied and validated tools and methodologies
- Open-ended questions provide qualitative data that can add context to quantitative results
- Parent response rates are typically poor (average is 7.1%)
 - 1.2% (Finding Efficiencies and Savings) to 21% (Parent retention)
 - IB parent survey: 10.8% RR
- These are potentially BIASED samples



Summary: Gifted Programming at HCDSB

- Though often claimed, it is not universally accepted that gifted children are at increased risk of mental health issues (e.g. depression, anxiety, suicide): <http://sengifted.org/the-impact-of-giftedness-on-psychological-well-being/>
 - Factors such as poor social functioning and increased stress may partly explain difference
 - “Gifted kids are at increased risk of mental illness” is inaccurate and misleading
- Research works with senior staff to collect, evaluate and compare multiple sources of data to measure student achievement and well-being
 - Marks, standardized tests, attendance, social, demographic, and engagement factors (TTFM)
- We are confident that these results are valid and truly represent the views of the stakeholders
- The research on giftedness is complex, there is no one size fits all solution
 - Our results are consistent with the literature
 - Increased variability of courses and better utilization of IEPs indicated from the survey



Clarification on Excerpts from the November 20 2018 Delegation on the Gifted Student Survey

Excerpt - page 1

“crucial decisions based on manipulated and biased information. Decisions which jeopardize the future of some of our most vulnerable, at-risk students”

Data does not support that students identified Gifted comprise our most vulnerable, at risk students



Excerpt - page 1

“Tonight I will demonstrate to you that the survey was not only poorly structured and biased but that no reasonable, objective person could have reached those conclusions.”

The survey was constructed by and the report was compiled by the Research Department. All facets complied with Board policies. All surveys that involve humans must comply with the Tri-Council Policy Statement for ethical research in humans (TCPS2)

The only intent of the survey was to gather secondary students' voice with regard to Gifted Programming at HCDSB



Excerpt from page 2

“Staff’s interpretation of the results were shared at a SEAC Meeting at which I, the Gifted student representative for this Board was not present, then with a parent, and then finally, lastly, with me....why so secretive?”

Member informed SEAC at 5:14 pm that she would not be attending. Information was not deferred as Trustees were already informed of the survey

Member was present when minutes of the March meeting were approved at the April meeting

A request for the full survey report to be shared with SEAC was never made

Member referenced the survey multiple times in a delegation to the Board on April 3rd 2018 regarding Gifted Transportation



Excerpt from page 7

“after repeatedly failing to comply with the Education Act and previous Tribunal orders with respect to a Gifted student”

Tribunal referenced was complex, student had multiple identifications, only a component of this case involved the student’s Giftedness

Previous tribunal had nothing to do with Giftedness, it was regarding the student’s Communication identification

This information is a matter of public record



The Voice of SEAC

Achieving Believing Belonging

The Voice of SEAC and Your Role as an Association Rep

When, as SEAC association reps, you delegate the Board and you identify yourself as a member of SEAC, you run the risk of:

- providing misinformation to Trustees
- influencing decisions regarding budget
- disparaging both Programs and Special Education Staff at Halton Catholic
- negating the voice of SEAC



The Voice of SEAC

SEAC should and does have a voice.

SEAC's mandate is to make recommendations to the Board in respect of any matter affecting the establishment and development of Special Education programs and services for students of the Board with exceptional needs

The Education Act sets out the requirements for SEAC committees to provide advice on special education to their local board or school authority.

