

5. Business Arising from Previous Meetings

B. Agnew reminded members that the Ministry memo on the Special Education Funding Model went out with the meeting package and asked if there were any questions.

6. Special Education Board Policy Review**7. Action and Information Items****7.1 SEAC Goal Setting**

B. Agnew discussed SEAC goals and calendar agenda items and opened up the floor for discussion. Goal setting items were gathered. B. Agnew informed members she would share the working SEAC monthly calendar which is used to form the monthly agendas. A summary of SEAC Goals from the discussion will be compiled in a document and sent to members to discuss at the January 2021 meeting. B. Agnew asked members to email any other goals they may think of after the meeting.

7.2 Nomination re: Autism Ontario

B. Agnew announced that a nomination had been received from Autism Ontario for D. Bardon to represent their association on SEAC. The Autism Ontario nomination will go to the Board meeting on Tuesday, January 5, 2021 for trustee approval.

8. Communications to SEAC**8.1 Superintendent's Report**

S. Balogh provided updates on:

Social Worker Update: S. Balogh welcomed and introduced J. Acheson who is the new Acting Chief Social Worker for P. Codner who has started her secondment with School Mental Health Ontario.

Speech and Language: A summary was provided by D. Kollee on virtual speech and language services. A survey was conducted with parents in June on the virtual speech and language services during the COVID-19 school closures. This data has been used to inform planning for speech and language services for the 2020-2021 school year.

8.2 Trustee Reports

N. Guzzo experienced technical difficulties and was unable to provide the report. The report will be provided to members at a later date.

8.3 Association Report-ABC Ontario

M. Lourenco and J. Lim provided a report on concerns with the transition planning. A sub-committee was proposed to discuss recommendations and to seek other SEAC member's input.

B. Agnew agreed to add this to business arising as an item and suggested members to provide any further comments at the January meeting.

9. SEAC Discussion

No items were brought forward for discussion.

10. Meeting Summary and Next Steps

All notes from the goal setting exercise will be compiled and shared at the January meeting.

11. Next Agenda: Meeting Monday, January 25, 2021

The agenda will include the election of chair and vice chair.

12. Adjournment**12.1 Resolution re Absentees (Chair)**

Moved by: M. Lourenco

Seconded by: R. Barreiro

RESOLVED, that M. Arteaga, M. Duarte, be excused. CARRIED

12.2 Adjournment and Closing Prayer (Chair)

Moved by: D. Rabenda

Seconded by: P. Moran

RESOLVED, that the meeting adjourn. CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m. with a prayer led by the Chair.

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Association Report

Association:	ABC Ontario
Representative:	Maria Lourenco / Jessica Lim
Meeting Date:	December 14, 2020
Upcoming Events or Conferences	
Website links/Brochure /Flyer attachments:	
New Initiatives:	
Other Information:	Please see report attached regarding HCDSB Transition Planning.



DECEMBER 14, 2020

The purpose of this association report is to formalize ABC Ontario's concerns with respect to Transition Planning as outlined in the 2020 HCDSB Special Education Plan.

The concerns outlined by ABC Ontario were raised during the recent review of the 2019 HCDSB Special Education Plan ("the Plan"), and were expected to be addressed in the revised 2020 Plan, however, they were not and there is no evidence that the concerns have been otherwise addressed. Specifically, there are significant transition issues affecting Gifted students which have not been addressed to ABC Ontario or SEAC.

In particular, the Transition Planning section of the Plan includes a section on "Supporting the Transition to/from a Regional Specialized Class within HCDSB".

During the review of the Plan, ABC Ontario specifically raised concerns about Gifted students transitioning from an elementary Special Education Class into a secondary regular class placement, a scenario which exists for all Gifted students with a Special Education class placement in Grade 8 by virtue of the board's lack of continuity of a full range of placements from elementary to secondary.

The Plan mentions a regional IPRC being "convened whenever a student transitions to/from a placement in a specialized class". An IPRC is not a transition plan and is particularly insufficient in the case where a change in placement is not the result of a change in assessment or learning profile or even initiated by the teacher, parents or student, but rather the result of the board no longer providing the placement option determined to be the most suitable for the exceptional student.

Due to the board's lack of continuity of a full range of placements from elementary to secondary, students placed in a Grade 8 Gifted class must accept a change of placement into a regular class placement in Grade 9, regardless of their learning profile and identified needs. In this scenario, Gifted students are dealing with three critical transitions:

- new school, possibly in a different community/new family of schools
- move from elementary to secondary
- change in placement from special education class to regular class

HCDSB has a responsibility to make this transition successful for these exceptional students, particularly given that one of three major transitions occurring simultaneously is a direct and sole result of board policy.

Based on feedback from parents, ABC Ontario has also learned that many parents are not even aware of the significance or implications of the change in "placement".

With respect to transitioning *into* the regional Gifted classes in Grade 5, ABC Ontario has received mixed feedback from parents with regards to understanding the placement options available to newly identified Gifted students, and receiving sufficient information to make a well informed decision in the time required.

ABC Ontario is seeking feedback from other association members and members at large with respect to additional concerns with Transition Planning within HCDSB and whether there is interest in a subcommittee to bring forth recommendations, or whether members would be interested in setting aside time at a future SEAC meeting for further discussion and recommendations.

If concerns with transition planning are not shared by other exceptionalities, ABC would request further discussion directly with Special Education staff to address our concerns.

Preliminary considerations for Transition Planning for Gifted students could include:

- reintroducing the Gifted Information Night, virtually, for families of newly identified Grade 4 students, to ensure consistent and equitable access to information about Grade 5 placement options, as well as a preliminary review of secondary options
 - o for 2020, a virtual session would likely be the only option, but would also be a great option for future years, as not all families are able to attend the in-person events in any given year
- providing information regarding ABC Ontario to families of newly identified students so that we may support them in their journey and connect them to other parents who have been through the process – ABC Ontario would further support this initiative for newly identified students of any exceptionality, to be provided information from their relevant association(s)
- discussions regarding Secondary pathway options to start at the end of grade 6 and include parents; options discussed should include Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Academic stream, or other options including transfer to Gifted program available at other boards if that is in the best interest of the student and their learning needs; while students currently use “My BluePrint” to explore their pathways, parents too need to be informed of the available pathways and the transition considerations through the transition planning process
- Secondary pathway options continue to be explored in the fall of Grade 7 through intentional invitations to participate in AP, IB and Grade 8 information nights
- ensure grade 8 Gifted transition activities such as open houses and other secondary transition activities and events can be accessed at the student’s school of choice or all possible schools of interest where students remain undecided (ie. home high school, Gifted family of schools high school, AP/IB program secondary school)
- discussions around Grade 8 Reach Ahead credits available in summer before Grade 9 and opportunities explicitly provided in option sheet planning for Grade 9
- discussions around accelerated programming options and opportunities explicitly provided through night school and/or summer school courses and option sheet planning for all secondary grades

ABC Ontario would also like to collaborate with staff with respect to other ways to prepare students transitioning from a Regional Gifted class environment into a regular classroom environment, in order to best prepare these students for success and the opportunity to realize their full potential.