

Report from the Informal Working Group to TCDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) March 9, 2022

INTRODUCTORY Remarks

Special Education Plan Review (Spec Ed Plan Review)

This report contains feedback on

1. The Board's Consultation Process

In April 2021, the Informal Working Group recommended to SEAC that Special Services (SS) Staff give priority for revision to the following five areas of the Spec Ed Plan:

1. IPRC Process
2. IEP Process
3. Special Education Placements provided by the Board
4. Parent Guide to Special Education
5. Board's Consultation Process

SEAC approved this priority order and SS Staff revised these and other sections for the submission to the Ministry of Education required every year by July 31st when there are changes to the Board's Spec Ed Plan.

For the 2021-2022 SEAC Review of the Spec Ed Plan, the Informal Working Group is planning to start the review with these five sections, and then continue the review of the other sections in the order that they occur in the Spec Ed Plan.

Questions for Superintendent Meehan and the two sections reviewed for the March 9, 2022 SEAC meeting follow.

Questions for Superintendent Meehan:

1. When will the next Board Equity and Improvement Plan (BEIP) be completed and what portion of it will be relevant to Special Services and the Spec Ed Plan? (recommendation from last year was to delete the former BLIP from the Spec Ed Plan)
2. Please provide information about the Accountability Framework for all designated exceptionalities and how the various groups gather data in their review process. How does this relate to the Board's Consultation Process?

3. Please explain why Special Services does not conduct annual or bi-annual surveys of parents/guardians of students receiving Special Education Services as part of the Board's Consultation Process?

TCDSB Spec Ed Plan Review July 2021 Version

For each section of the TCDSB Special Education Plan (Spec Ed Plan) we have commented with three sections:

1. "Required" refers to what is required by the Ministry guidelines (Special Education in Ontario (Draft Version, 2017) PART B: Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans)
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/os/2017/spec_ed_3.html#intro
2. "Findings" are what the working group observed in the TCDSB Special Education Plan currently on the TCDSB website.
3. "Recommendations" are what we think needs to be changed in the TCDSB plan, and in some instances, our suggested changes.

1.The Board's Consultation Process

1. Ministry Requirements:

- i. Provide a description of the consultation process.
- ii. Provide a statement of how, in accordance with Education Act - Regulation 464/97, the Board ensures that its SEAC is involved in the annual review of the Board's Special Education Plan.
- iii. Describe any majority or minority reports on the Board's Special Education Plan that have been received from SEAC.
- iv. Explain the Board's response to these reports.
- v. Describe how members of the community, particularly parents of children who are receiving Special Education programs and services, are informed of timelines, and methods for providing input into the Board's Special Education Plan.
- vi. A summary of feedback received because of consultation with members of the community
- vii. Results of any internal or external reviews of existing Special Education programs and services within the Board that has taken place in the previous or current school year.

- viii. List of internal and external reviews of the Board's Special Education programs and services that are planned for the following year.

2. Findings

- i. A description of the consultation process with SEAC is present.
- ii. Many of the segments required by the Ministry Guidelines for the consultation process are present but mixed up in the text body.
- iii. The required specific statement referring to Regulation 464/97 and SEAC involvement is missing.
- iv. There is a statement that the Board ensures that SEAC is involved in the annual review of the Board's Special Education Plan (Spec Ed Plan).
- v. There is a description of SEAC's review process of the Spec Ed Plan through SEAC's informal working group.
- vi. There is no description of majority or minority reports (if any) having been received by SEAC, nor how they were dealt with, and if they were included in the submission to the Ministry.
- vii. There is no section showing the Board's response to these majority/minority reports.
- viii. There is a general "statement of how members of the community, particularly parents of children who are receiving Special Education programs and services, are informed of the timelines and methods for providing input into the Board's Spec Ed Plan."
- ix. Little information is contained as to the timelines, process, and/or methods that these stakeholders should use to provide input into the Board's Spec Ed Plan.
- x. A summary of the feedback (if any) that has been received by the Board is missing.
- xi. There is no section explaining the results of any internal or external reviews of existing Special Education programs and services within the Board that have taken place in the previous or current school year.
- xii. There is no section that lists the internal and external reviews of the Board's Special Education programs and services that are planned for the following year.

3. Recommendations:

A wonderful review and appropriate changes were completed by staff, but we do feel that more changes are needed particularly to make each section easier for stakeholders to read and fully understand the TCDSB Consultation Process.

- a) Section headers should be more specific so that they can be used to make it easier for the various stakeholders to locate the section that applies to them. We suggest that you:
 - a. Combine similar parent-led stakeholders like CPIC, OAPCE, CSPC, into one section for parent community consultation
 - b. Combine similar student stakeholders like CSLIT and e-CSLIT
 - c. Parents be provided with their own section
 - d. SEAC should also be in a separate section.
- b) Within each section provide the Ministry required detail(s) (or a sub-section) to explain the process for stakeholder input into the TCDSB Special Education Plan and if this is by an annual stakeholder survey, a motion, or by a delegation to SEAC or the Board of Trustees. Include in these details when and how each stakeholder can provide input, as well as when and how the Board will respond to the provided stakeholder input.
- c) For clarity provide a separate section in each stakeholder section that directs the reader to where they can obtain a summary of past stakeholder input, and what was changed in the Special Education Plan because of this input, if nothing was changed in the Plan explain why.
- d) State in the annual report update if no information was received from a stakeholder.
- e) Add appropriate headers for every section and sub-section so that it is easy to locate the area a reader is interested in.
- f) Ensure that the required reference to Regulation 464/97 is contained within the SEAC section and not, as is presently, just a mention in the header.
- g) Explain in the SEAC section that an informal working group was formed to review the Board's Special Education Plan and this working group reports back to SEAC. These reports when accepted are SEAC's recommendations for changes and improvements on the Special Education Plan. This will show to the Ministry that TCDSB meets the required annual review of the Board's Special Education Plan.
- h) Include within the SEAC section details as to how the Board responds to all SEAC's motions and recommendations.
- i) Under the SEAC section follow the Ministry requirement by summarizing the majority and minority reports received from SEAC, when and how these reports are reviewed by the Board, the Board's response to the majority and minority reports. The specific reports should be included in a report attached to the Special Education Plan that is submitted annually to the ministry. *For example, all submissions from the 2020-2021 SEAC working group accepted (or rejected) by staff should be included in the annual report.*

- j) Indicate in the annual report to the Ministry if SEAC did not provide a majority/minority report.
- k) Ensure that a reader can be directed to where they can locate the “results of any internal and external reviews of existing Special Education programs and services that have taken place.” Although only the current and previous school years are required, we recommend adding results from the previous 3, 4, or 5 years. If no reviews were done in a given school year, indicate this in the report.
- l) Create a section listing any “internal and external reviews of the Board’s Special Education programs and services that are planned for the following year.” Add a header for that section. If there are no plans for review, indicate this in the report.