



POLICY SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

POLICY NO: A.23

Date Approved:
March 27, 2014

**Date of Next
Review:** January
2024

Dates of Amendments:
September 2019

Cross References:

Education Act, Section 57.1(1)

Ontario Regulation 464/97, Special Education Advisory Committees TCDSB

Special Education Plan (current)

Provincial Parent Associations Advisory Committee (PAAC) on SEAC

Purpose:

This policy describes the process for the appointment of members to the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), its composition, and its terms of reference.

Scope and Responsibility:

This policy applies to SEAC, an advisory committee legislated by the Ontario Ministry of Education and established by the TCDSB. Its responsibility is to make purposeful and effective advisory decisions that promote the enhancement of TCDSB Special Education Programs and Services for exceptional pupils of the Board. Such decisions shall pertain to the achievement and well-being of students with Special Education needs.

Alignment with MYSP:

Living Our Catholic Values

Enhancing Public Confidence



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Fostering Student Achievement and Well-Being

Achieving Excellence in Governance

Policy:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) shall establish a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) at the Inaugural Meeting of the Board during the year that it is elected. The selection and composition of SEAC members shall adhere to the regulations, parameters, and scope outlined in this policy in order to make purposeful and effective advisory decisions that promote the enhancement of TCDSB Special Education Programs and Services. The TCDSB will strive to ensure that committee membership is, to every extent possible, representative of the diverse community it serves; and in accordance with Regulation 464/97.

Regulations:

1. Local Association Memberships:

- a. Appointments shall hold office during the term of office of the members of the Board and until a new Board is elected and organized.
- b. Appointments from local associations shall not exceed 12 members representing these five broad categories of exceptionalities as defined by the Ontario Ministry of Education:
 - i. Behaviour
 - ii. Communication



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- iii. Intellectual
- iv. Multiple Exceptionalities
- v. Physical
- c. All nominations shall be made in writing by the executive of the local chapter to the Director of Education no later than October 31 in the year of the Board's election.
- d. The Superintendent of Special Services shall present the names of all nominees and the associations they represent to the Student Achievement and Well Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources Committee along with an appointments recommendation.
- e. The appointment of members will be made at the Inaugural Meeting of the Board.
- f. In the event a member is unable to complete the full term (4 years), the association represented will be requested to nominate a replacement within two months.
- g. If requests for membership occur during the term of office, then a recommendation will be made to the Board through SEAC.
- h. A local association may not be represented by more than one member.
- i. A SEAC "member vacates his/her seat if he or she:
 - (a) is convicted of an indictable offence;
 - (b) absents himself or herself without being authorized by resolution entered in the minutes from three consecutive regular meetings of the committee; or



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(c) ceases to hold the qualifications to be appointed to the committee.” 464/97 7(1).

2. TCDSB Trustee Membership:

- a. The Board will appoint three Trustees who shall serve during the term of office of the members of the Board at its Inaugural Meeting.

3. TCDSB (Community) Members-at-Large:

- a. The Board shall appoint a minimum of 4 and/or up to a maximum calculated as 50 percent of the total number of sitting Local Association Members according to its own discretion on the advice of SEAC and in accordance with O. Reg. 464/97- 2 (5).
- b. Recommendations for (community) membership will be made to the Board through SEAC and satisfy the requirements of the definition for Members at Large included with this policy, Definitions 2.

4. SEAC Alternate Members:

- a. The Board shall appoint alternate members for SEAC members who are local association representatives. Alternate members can ensure that a voting member is available in the absence of the SEAC member, and can assist the SEAC member in preparing for meetings and connecting with the local association and provincial parent association; and
- b. Will receive agendas.

5. Information, recommendations, and advice to the Board will be



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recorded in the minutes of SEAC and placed on the Order Paper of the Regular Board meeting.

6. The Board will annually determine the meeting dates for SEAC (minimum of 10), as per the process for its Standing and Statutory committees, at its regular meeting in December. All regular Committee meetings will take place at the TCDSB's Catholic Education Centre and are open for the public to attend. The Board shall ensure that all meetings meet mandated AODA accessibility compliance standards.
7. The Board will ensure that SEAC agendas and associated backup materials are distributed to members, trustees and associations at least 72 hours prior to SEAC's meeting and minutes of the meetings are recorded.
8. That the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee shall be a member of the committee.
9. That SEAC be governed by the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order – Newly Revised, and the operating By-laws of the TCDSB; and that all SEAC members shall attend an orientation and training pertaining to a variety of areas including: purpose and scope, roles and responsibilities, legislation, regulations, policy, budget, school board obligations, and Special Education on an annual basis.
10. That the term of the Chair and Vice Chair be for one year and an election of the Chair and Vice Chair be conducted annually, at the December SEAC meeting.



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Definitions:

1. The five broad categories of exceptionalities as defined by the Ontario Ministry of Education are the following:

A. **Behaviour** - A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance, and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following:

- a. an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships;
- b. excessive fears or anxieties;
- c. a tendency to compulsive reaction;
- d. an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors;
- e. or any combination thereof.

B. Communication

a. **Autism**: A severe learning disorder that is characterized by disturbances in:

- i. rate of educational development;
- ii. ability to relate to the environment;
- iii. mobility;
- iv. perception, speech, and language; and



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- v. lack of the representational, symbolic behavior that precedes language.
- b. **Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing:** An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.
- c. **Language Impairment:** A Learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or the use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may:
 - i. involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and
 - ii. include one or more of:
 - a. language delay
 - b. dysfluency
 - c. voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based.
- d. **Speech Impairment:** A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors; that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm,



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and stress

e. **Learning Disabilities:** A learning disorder evident in both academic and social situations that involves one or more of the processes necessary for the proper use of spoken language or the symbols of communication, and that is characterized by a condition that:

i. Is not primarily the result of:

1. impairment of vision;
2. impairment of hearing;
3. physical disability;
4. developmental disability;
5. primary emotional disturbance; or
6. cultural difference.

ii. Results in a significant discrepancy between academic achievement and assessed intellectual ability, with deficits in one or more of the following:

- 1) receptive language (listening, reading);
- 2) language processing (thinking, conceptualizing, integrating);
- 3) expressive language (talking, spelling, writing); or
- 4) mathematical computations.

iii. And may be associated with one or more conditions diagnosed as:

- 1) a perceptual handicap;



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- 2) a brain injury/organic brain injury;
- 3) minimal brain dysfunction;
- 4) dyslexia; or
- 5) developmental aphasia.

C. Intellectual

- a. **Giftedness:** An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.
- b. **Mild Intellectual Disability:** A learning disorder characterized by:
 - i. an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive service
 - ii. an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development; or
 - iii. a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.
- c. **Developmental Disability:** A severe learning disorder characterized by:
 - i. an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow



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intellectual development;

ii. an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development; or

iii. a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self- support.

D. Multiple Exceptionalities: A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments or physical disabilities that is of such a nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments or disabilities.

E. Physical

- a. **Physical Disability:** A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of pupils without exceptionalities who are of the same age or development level.
- b. **Blind and Low Vision** - A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.



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2. **Local Associations** - In Regulation 464/97, Section (1) a “local association” is defined as: *“an association or organization of parents that operates locally within the area of jurisdiction of a board and that is affiliated with an association or organization that is not an association or organization of professional educators but that is incorporated and operates throughout Ontario to further the interests and well-being of one or more groups of exceptional children or adults.”*
3. **Members at Large**– Members drawn from the TCDSB community demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Board, through SEAC, an interest and background in Special Education and/or one or more of the categories of exceptionality.

Evaluation and Metrics:

1. The effectiveness of this policy will be determined by outcomes related to the advice of SEAC that is intended to enhance the delivery of Special Education programs and services, and is in keeping with the Toronto Catholic District School Board Multi-Year Strategic Plan.
2. Advice provided to the Board of Trustees and the Director of Education, and any action arising out of this advice, will be monitored, assessed and reported back to SEAC in a timely fashion.