



Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Handbook

Written by the Limestone District School Board
SEAC

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Purpose of the Special Education Advisory Committee

SEAC stands for Special Education Advisory Committee. It is a mandatory committee of every Ontario school board. The role of the SEAC is to make recommendations to the Board on behalf of parents, associations and community partners. The recommendations help ensure that exceptional pupils served by the Board receive the special education programs and services that meet their needs. There are many committees within the Board, but this is the only committee specifically reserved for the input of the broader community on special education.

Here are the areas in which the SEAC can take on responsibilities or offer recommendations to the Limestone District School Board (LDSB):

- Any matter that affects the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the Board;
- Participation in the Board's annual review of its Special Education Plan;
- Participation in the Board's annual budget process as it relates to special education and;
- Review of the financial statements of the Board as they relate to special education

Who are the Members of SEAC?

At the Limestone District School Board (LDSB), the SEAC is one of the mandatory committees that Ontario legislation dictates for the Board. SEAC members must be:

- A Canadian citizen;
- At least 18 years old;
- A resident in the Board's jurisdiction;
- A public school tax supporter of the LDSB and;
- NOT employed by the LDSB

Here are some other guidelines that help determine who is appointed by the Board to become voting members of the LDSB SEAC:

- One representative from each local association/chapter that supports exceptional pupils and their families. The number of associations must not exceed twelve. A member is nominated by their association for appointment by the Board. Each association should also nominate an alternate to be appointed by the Board.
- Up to three members at large who are NOT representatives of a local association, a Board member or a Board committee member.
- Two Trustee representatives and an alternate.

Here are some other things to keep in mind about membership on the SEAC:

- An association not currently represented on the SEAC can ask the Board for representation. If the maximum of twelve associations has already been reached, the Board will decide which twelve local associations shall be represented.
- The LDSB supports SEAC by having the Supervising Principal, Learning for All, or designate, Educational Services Leadership Team and relevant District School Board staff attend meetings.

Each SEAC representative is normally appointed for a four-year term, the same term as trustees. If a vacancy occurs, the Board will appoint a qualified person for the remainder of the term. If an association representative vacancy occurs, an additional association may be nominated to the SEAC of the LDSB.

What is the Relationship between the SEAC and the LDSB?

The SEAC is an advisory committee to the School Board, legislated in Ontario. That means that, within the parameters of that legislation, the SEAC can offer advice and make recommendations to the Board. (Please see Purpose for specifics.)

Here are some of the ways that the LDSB offers support to the SEAC:

- The Board prepares an agenda, in consultation with the SEAC Chair, for distribution, and records and distributes the minutes of each meeting in a timely fashion. This allows SEAC members to prepare for each meeting and review any necessary material.
- The Board provides information about its activities in special education, as well as about the Ministry and Board policies, to SEAC members within a reasonable time frame.
- The Board provides a schedule of the SEAC's upcoming meetings.

Here are some other supportive actions that Board personnel provide to the SEAC:

- Provide ongoing presentations to SEAC about the Board's special education programs and services.
- Invite District school board staff to attend SEAC meetings as needed.
- Respond to requests from SEAC for information.

How Does SEAC Operate?

As mentioned previously in this document, every school board in Ontario is required to constitute a SEAC to provide feedback, advice and recommendations on special education activities, procedures and policies. The LDSB is no exception.

SEAC performs its mission in a number of ways:

1. SEAC holds monthly meetings. These meetings are public. The agenda is published in advance. District school board personnel, both in administrative and in professional capacities, support these monthly SEAC meetings.
2. SEAC members may participate in sub-committees and working groups of the SEAC as needed.

What Happens to SEAC Discussions and Recommendations?

The discussions, the recommendations and the votes of every SEAC meeting are captured in the minutes of the meeting. Those minutes are posted to the LDSB web site for every parent/guardian and the public to read.

Recommendations to the Board of Trustees are sent on for further discussion and possible action. These too are posted on the LDSB web site.

SEAC members who are representing an Association will likely have consulted with their Association in advance of an important discussion and will report back to their Association following a SEAC meeting.

Trustees who sit on the SEAC may also decide to include the information of SEAC discussions in their work on the Board of Trustees.

Information from Board personnel in response to questions from SEAC are included with minutes of meetings and form part of the public record on the LDSB web site.

How Does SEAC Communicate With the Community and How Does the Community Communicate With SEAC?

The primary functions of the LDSB SEAC in communicating with parents/guardians and the public are:

- To provide advice and recommendations on special education to the Board. This advice should not focus on specific cases but rather on the overarching needs of the system. In the case of association members, they bring their perspective and understanding of the exceptionality and the pupils impacted. Members at large consult widely with members of the LDSB community and reflect the results back to the SEAC.
- To listen to and respond to presentations and delegations from members of the public. The knowledge gained from these presentations and delegations is often reflected in advice and recommendations provided to the Board of Trustees.
- To follow up on each set of SEAC minutes by ensuring that Association membership and the broader LDSB electorate understand what recommendations have been made to the Board of Trustees, so that progress can be followed and further action taken when needed.

The primary methods that parents and the public can use to communicate with SEAC or SEAC members are as follows:

- If you are a member of an Association represented on SEAC, stay in touch with your SEAC representative.
- If your Association is not currently represented on SEAC and you feel that it should be, consider writing a letter to the Director of Education/Secretary of the Board and request representation.
- Be aware of the SEAC Agenda and Minutes which are posted on the Board's web site.
- Take advantage of the opportunity to appear at a SEAC meeting with a delegation or a presentation, if you believe the issue warrants this format.
- Remember that SEAC meetings are public and you can attend if you wish.

Finally, SEAC itself has its own page on the LDSB web site. Contact information for SEAC members is listed here. All SEAC members can encourage people to check it often, and to let us know what other information we can provide.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How should a SEAC member- especially one who represents an association- deal with the different roles that s/he has to play?

A. It often is a balancing act but here are some basic guidelines that SEAC members adhere to:

A SEAC member represents the concerns of the association and the exceptionality being represented.

A SEAC member should be communicating and consulting about issues regarding special education. This can mean speaking with parents/guardians, other SEAC members and Board staff and trustees, while respecting confidentiality of individuals.

A SEAC member can provide information to the family of an exceptional student in their capacity as a SEAC member.

A SEAC member is not there to advocate for his/her own child or on behalf of a specific parent/child in their capacity as SEAC rep.

Q. If I am a SEAC alternate, what is my role?

A. Being an alternate is a really important role. You can be asked to become the voting representative of your association at any time, if the SEAC member is unable to attend a meeting or unable to continue with the responsibilities. That means you need to keep informed on issues, discuss them with the SEAC member and, whenever possible, attend the SEAC meeting.

Q. If I am a SEAC member (or alternate), what information should I be concentrating on?

A. That's a really good question because there is so much information to absorb. Here are some suggestions for key information to concentrate on:

- **The expectations set out for SEAC by legislation.**
- **The LDSB's Special Education Plan.**
- **The ongoing work of SEAC. Rely on your SEAC colleagues and your association predecessor for help with this,**
- **The regulations and important policies that will help you understand the funding and delivery of services to all exceptional pupils. (Check Appendix A of this handbook for some help)**
- **Definitions of terms and acronyms used by this Board in the area of special education. (Check Appendix B for Acronyms and Appendix C for Glossary of Terms)**
- **An overview of the Board's budget, especially the details dealing with special education.**

Q. What happens if I miss a meeting?

A. Missed meetings can happen. That's why you have an alternate who can take your place at the table and vote. But if you miss three consecutive SEAC meetings without prior authorization and your alternate is not there to replace you, you may lose your seat at the SEAC table.

Further, if your association is without representation for six months, the association may lose its membership on SEAC and would need to re- apply at a later date for renewed membership.

Note: Upon request, the LDSB can authorize an extended absence if you need to miss two or more meetings.

Q. What is the difference between a member at large to SEAC and an association representative in terms of how they are appointed to SEAC?

A. An association representative is nominated by members of a specific association to represent them at SEAC. The LDSB then appoints the nominees to SEAC. Members at large apply directly to the Board to represent the community as a whole and are then appointed by the LDSB. The LDSB has decided to have a maximum of three members at large to represent the community.

Q. How does SEAC make its decisions?

A. Here are the key elements:

- **The SEAC Chair and Vice-Chair are elected each January from among the voting associations and members at large**
- **If you have a majority (50% plus one) of voting SEAC members, you have quorum. You need quorum for SEAC meetings to take place and continue.**
- **The LDSB SEAC follows Roberts Rules of Order meeting procedures. It also follows the by-laws of LDSB. You can find them at the LDSB web site at <http://limestone.on.ca/board/Documents/Home%20Page>**

Q. How does SEAC tell the LDSB what it thinks or recommend what action it wants the trustees to take?

A. If a SEAC member believes that there is an issue that SEAC as a whole should move ahead, that's the time to table a motion. When voting on the motion, if the vote is tied, the motion fails.

Q. How do I get more detailed information?

A. There are a number of online resources to learn more about the areas addressed in this document. Start with the Ontario Ministry of Education website (www.edu.gov.on.ca). You'll find links to regulations, special education resources as well as information related to SEAC. Also, the "Provincial Parent Association Advisory Committee on Special Education Advisory Committees" (PAAC on SEAC) has produced a "PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook" (2010). Finally, don't forget to check out the SEAC section on the LDSB website.

Appendix A: Regulations and Policy Statements Relevant to Special Education

You need to know what some of the key underlying legislation is that SEAC members use to guide them.

Education Act and Regulations

The Education Act provides the framework for the provision of special education programs and services for pupils. It also gives us the overall framework for the identification and placement of exceptional pupils. The key sections that SEAC members need to know about include the following:

- The definition of exceptional pupil, special education program and special education services.
- The government's commitment that all exceptional children in the province have appropriate special education programs and services available to them and a description of how that program or service will be made by the Board.
- The right of parents and guardians to appeal an identification and/or placement if they don't believe it appropriate and the right to have information made readily available to them on the mechanisms for filing an appeal.

Key Regulations that arise out of the Act relate to the following:

- The identification and placement of exceptional pupils, the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) review, appeal procedures, the role of parents and guardians in these processes and the creation and maintenance of the Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- The requirement for each school board to maintain a Special Education Report that describes the board's programs and services and how they are delivered. This regulation also sets out the authority for the Minister of Education to require a school board to amend its plan if necessary.
- The rules and scope of activities of the SEAC in each board.

Policy and Program Memorandum (PPM) Statements

There are two main things for SEAC members to know about PPM Statements:

- These are the Ontario Ministry of Education's policy expectations for school boards
- They are developed to help school boards to deliver Ministry policies and procedures

Here are some important PPM Statements to know about:

- The definitions of learning disabilities and information on identification processes, programming, and resources available to school boards (PPM No. 8)
- The requirements for procedures for early identification of children's learning needs (PPM No. 11)
- The psychological testing and assessment of students and the principles upon which school boards should base decisions regarding the use of these (PPM 59)

- **Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) and when to accommodate, defer or exempt students who need to take the test (PPM 127)**
- **Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into programs for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (PPM 140)**
- **Bullying Prevention and Intervention related to exceptional students (PPM 144).**
- **Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour advises principals to take into account some factors of exceptionality in deciding on suspension (PPM 145)**
- **Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Needs (PPM 156)**

Appendix B: Special Education Acronyms

AAC	Augmentative and Alternative Communication
ABA	Applied Behaviour Analysis
ACW	Adolescent Care Worker
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AEP	Alternative Education Program (Funding Term)
AO	Autism Ontario
APD	Auditory Processing Disorder
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
ASL	American Sign Language
ASO	Autism Society of Ontario
BAT	Behavior Action Team
CAP	Central Auditory Processing
CAPD	Central Auditory Processing Disorder
CCAC	Community Care Access Centre
CD	Conduct Disorder
CEC	Council for Exceptional Children
CELF	Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals
CF	Cystic Fibrosis
CFSA	Child and Family Services Act
CHS	Canadian Hearing Society
CLK	Community Living Kingston
CMHO	Children's Mental Health Ontario
CMS	Children's Memory Scale
CNIB	Canadian National Institute for the Blind
CODE	Council for Directors of Education
CP	Cerebral Palsy
DD	Developmental Disability
DMD	Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy
DRA	Developmental Reading Assessment
DSB	District School Board
DSM- V	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, 5th Edition
DSW	Developmental Service Worker
EA	Educational Assistant
ECE	Early Childhood Educator
EQAO	Education Quality and Accountability Office
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	Essential Skills Program
FACSFLA	Family and Children Services of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington
FAS	Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
FOI/POP	Freedom of Information/Protection of Privacy
FOS	Family of Schools
FSL	French as a Second Language
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
GDD	Global Developmental Delays
GSN	Grants for Student Needs
HI	Hearing Impaired
HOH	Hard of Hearing
IBI	Intensive Behaviour Intervention

IEP	Individual Education Plan
IPRC	Identification, Placement and Review Committee
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
LD	Learning Disability
LDAO	Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
LDAK	Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston
LDCC	Locally Developed Credit Courses
LNS	Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat
LPS	Learning Program Support (Teacher)
MACSE	Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education
MCSS	Ministry of Community and Social Services
MCYS	Ministry of Children & Youth Services
MD	Muscular Dystrophy
MFIPPA	Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
MID	Mild Intellectual Disability
MISA	Managing Information for Student Achievement
MOD	Modified
MOHLTC	Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care
NLD	Non-verbal Learning Disability
NOS	Not Otherwise Specified
OACL	Ontario Association for Community Living
OBIA	Ontario Brain Injury Association
OCASE	Ontario Council of Administrators in Special Education
OCD	Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
ODD	Oppositional Defiant Disorder
OEN	Ontario Education Number
OHRC	Ontario Human Rights Commission
OnSIS	The Ontario School Information System
OSR	Ontario School Record
OSSD	Ontario Secondary School Diploma
OSSLT	Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test
OST	Ontario Student Transcript
OT	Occupational Therapist or Occupational Therapy
OYAP	Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program
PDD	Pervasive Developmental Disorder
PECS	Picture Exchange Communication System
PISA	Program for International Assessment
PPM	Policy/Program Memoranda
PT	Physical Therapist or Physical Therapy
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SAL	Supervised Alternative Learning
SBHAO	Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Society
SEA	Special Equipment Amount
SEAB	Special Education Appeal Board
SEAC	Special Education Advisory Committee
SEF	School Effectiveness Framework
SEPPA	Special Education Per Pupil Amount
SET	Special Education Tribunal
SIP	Special Incidence Portion
SLP	Speech Language Pathologist
SO	Supervisory Officer

SSC	Student Support Counsellor
SST	Student Support Teacher
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
TSF	Tourette Syndrome Foundation
VI	Visually Impaired
VMI	Visual Motor Integration
VOCA	Voice Output Communication Aids
WIAT	Wechsler Individual Achievement Test
WISC	Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children
WISC-III	Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children – Third Edition
WJ-III	Woodcock-Johnson III Test of Achievement

Appendix C: Glossary of Terms

Adolescent Care Workers: Provide social, emotional, and other related support to secondary students.

Accommodated Programming: Uses special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports and/or individualized equipment required to enable a student to learn and to demonstrate learning. The provincial curriculum expectations for the grade are not altered for a student receiving accommodations.

Alternative Programming: Is a type of expectation developed to help students acquire knowledge and skills that are not represented in the Ontario Curriculum expectations. Because they are not part of a subject or course outlined in the provincial curriculum documents, alternative expectations are considered to constitute alternative programs or alternative courses. Examples of alternative programs/courses include speech remediation, social skills, orientation/mobility training and personal care programs.

Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA): A systematic and individualized method of teaching based on principles of learning and behaviour, to reduce undesirable and increase adaptive behaviour. ABA can be implemented in schools by teachers and school teams.

Assistive Technology District Resource Teachers: Provide training to staff and students regarding technology as an instructional tool and work with the Specialized Equipment Amount (SEA) technician who orders specialized equipment for students.

Autism Team: Provides support for students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The multidisciplinary team includes a Special Education Program Coordinator, Secondary Autism Support Teacher, Student Support Counsellor, Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Student Support Counsellor and Speech-Language Pathologist.

Behaviour Action Team (BAT): Provides support for students who are exhibiting a high level of behaviour at school and may be a risk to themselves and others. The multidisciplinary team includes Clinical Consultants, School Attendance Counsellors, Student Support Counsellors, the Aboriginal Resource Student Support Counsellor and the Itinerant Behaviour Teacher.

Behaviour Management Systems (BMS): The focus of the Behaviour Management Systems program is the understanding of those factors which impact behaviour, early interventions of a non-physical nature to address concerning behaviours and the reduction of aggressive behaviour in our schools.

Clinical Consultants: Provide support to students with learning challenges, social, emotional and/or behavioural issues through consultation and assessment

for students. The clinical consultant assists the school by problem solving with staff to identify the concern and develop a plan to support the student, teacher, and family.

District Learning Centres (DLC): Provide intensive student support in select sites across the district and can only be accessed through a referral process.

Early Learning Team: Uses a collaborative problem solving approach and works directly with the in-school team and Kindergarten educator team. The multidisciplinary team includes a Special Education Coordinator, Student Support Counsellor and Clinical Consultant.

Educational Assistant: Members of the educational system who work in schools to support student needs. Educational Assistants work with teachers to ensure the safety and medical needs of students are met. EAs may also implement accommodations and support students with their modified and/or alternative programming goals.

Home/Hospital Instruction: Is available through a referral process for students who are unable to attend school due to a medical diagnosis. Tutorial support is assigned to provide up to three hours per week in order to support the continuation of the student's educational program.

Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC): The purpose of an IPRC is to formally identify children who have special education needs as 'exceptional pupils' and to determine appropriate special education programs and services.

Individual Education Plan (IEP): A written plan for learning, developed for students with special needs, who may or may not be formally identified as exceptional, that outlines special education programming and accommodations and/or modifications of curriculum. The plan may also include alternative programming and transition plans

Learning Program Support Teachers (LPS): Provide program support to both secondary students and secondary teachers in special education, direct service for students, programming, Individual Education Plan (IEP) development, and assist with accessing community and district supports.

Life Skills: An alternative program which supports a student's personal development and may include personal care, personal life management, culinary skills, work habits, nutrition, money, transportation, and health and safety awareness.

Modified Programming: Changes made to the grade-level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs. Modification may include the use of expectations at a different grade level and/or an increase or

decrease in the number and/or complexity of expectations relative to the curriculum expectations for the regular grade level.

Orientation and Mobility (OM): An alternative program facilitating a student's skills need to safely move in his/her environment.

Self-Advocacy: An alternative program facilitating a student's understanding of his/her learning needs and the ability to communicate the strategies that are necessary for their success.

School Attendance Counsellor (SAC): Respond to referrals regarding habitually absent students, and provide consultative support to school staff and parents.

School to Community Team: Provides support for students identified as having a Developmental Disability and includes a Special Education Program Coordinator, Student Support Counsellor, Speech-Language Pathologist, and Transition Planning Coordinator.

Section 23: Section 23: A governmentally approved, specialized class that students may attend when he/she is unable to attend schools in their area because of individual care or treatment needs. The number "23" refers to the related section in the Grants for Student Needs and the number could be revised at any time.

Specialized Services for Students with Hearing Loss or Visual Impairments: The Hearing Support Teachers and Vision Support Teacher provide individualized service for students. The Resource Teacher provides consultation, program support, professional development, and arranges interpreting services upon request.

Speech-Language Pathologists: Assess students for speech and/or language difficulties and provide consultative support to school staff.

Special Incidence Portion (SIP) Allocation: Supports pupils who require more than two full-time staff to address the health and safety needs of both the students who have extraordinarily high needs related to their disabilities and/or exceptionalities and of others at their school. Eligibility criteria for SIP are outlined in the Special Education Funding Guidelines: Special Incidence Portion (SIP). SIP claims are submitted to the Ministry of Education regional offices for approval.

Student Support Counsellors (SSC): Address the behavioural, emotional and social needs of elementary students, provide behavioural problem solving, programming, and school support.

Student Support Teachers (SST): Provide program support to both elementary students and teachers in special education, programming.

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