



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)

HANDBOOK

Thames Valley District School Board SEAC HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS

This handbook has been prepared to assist you in understanding and performing your role as a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) representative and to help you confidentially respond to the needs of all exceptional children.

Special Education Advisory Committees are legally mandated advisory bodies established to provide advice to school boards on all matters related to Special Education. Responsibilities of SEAC members include:

- Responding to the needs of all exceptional children within the Board;
- Acquiring and maintaining a knowledge of Special Education;
- Bringing concerns of your association (but not individual cases);
- Informing your association and members about SEAC activities and information; and
- Providing input to the SEAC Chair for SEAC agendas.

Included in this handbook is a general overview of the SEAC, the Provincial Parent Association Advisory Committee (PAAC) on SEAC and the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE). You will also find specific information related to the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) SEAC such as our current member list, working committees, Board information and Board contacts.

In addition, each SEAC member will be provided with the following resources:

- Ministry of Education Standards for the Special Education Plan;
- Ministry of Education Standards for Planning, Development and Implementation of Individual Education Plans (IEP's);
- Ministry of Education Transition Plan Resource Guide;
- Resource Guides:
 - The Individual Education Plan Resource Guide (IEP);
 - Identification Placement and Review Committee Resource Guide (IPRC);
 - Parent Engagement: Communication Guide and Information for Parents and Students; and
- Thames Valley District School Board Special Education Plan.

In your role as a SEAC representative you'll be working primarily with Special Education: A Guide for Educators, the Thames Valley District School Board Special Education Plan and this handbook.

It is our hope that this handbook increases your awareness and understanding of SEAC and that you find your role as a SEAC representative to be a rewarding, positive experience.

PURPOSE OF SEAC

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. (Section 11(1) Reg. 464/97)

Recommendations from SEAC may be presented to the Board of Trustees, either in person or as a written submission that should include an explanation of the purpose of the recommendation (this would occur in the event that the recommendation is sufficiently straightforward that no personal presentation is required).

SEAC also plays a significant role in the review of the annual Special Education Plan and in that part of the annual budget process that relates to Special Education.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN

School Boards are specifically directed to provide SEAC with the opportunity to "participate in the Board's annual review" (Section 12(1) Reg. 464/97). This does not mean that SEAC may direct that the Board make amendments to its plan. SEAC may, however, recommend changes to the plan during the review process. Boards must include any majority or minority reports from SEAC when it submits its plan (*Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans* (2000) p.4). As well, any motions or recommendations from SEAC that are related to the Board's approval of the plan must also accompany it when submitted to the Ministry [*Standards* p.17].

BUDGET PROCESS

School boards must also ensure that SEAC's *have* the opportunity to "participate in the Board's annual budget process" of preparing estimates of *revenues* and expenditures, as that process relates to Special Education [Section 12(2) Reg. 464/97]. This means that the school Board must provide, at the *very* least, an opportunity for SEAC to be heard on any recommendations which it makes on budget issues which touch on Special Education programs and services before any final decisions are made on Special Education expenditures. Indeed, the entitlement to "participate" in budget decisions suggests that SEAC should be *involved actively* in the Special Education budget process, which might be achieved through meaningful consultation in the budget planning process.

As well, SEAC also needs to *have* the opportunity to review the financial statements it prepares annually for submission to the Ministry of Education, as those financial statements relate to Special Education [Section 12(3) Reg. 464/97]. This will allow SEAC's participation in the budget process to be more meaningful.

References:

Regulation 464/97, Education Act 1998. A copy is available in the Ministry of Education Special Education: A Guide for Educators (2001), Appendix 10.

An Educator's Guide to Special Education Law, Bowlby, Brenda J., Peters, Catherine, and MacKinnon, Martha. (2001). Aurora Professional Press, Aurora, Ontario.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Thames Valley District School Board SEAC has the following roles and responsibilities:

1. To make recommendations to the Board regarding the establishment, development, and delivery of Special Education programs and services.

SEAC activities which support this role include:

- Participating in program reviews;
- Receiving and responding to reports about Special Education programs and services;
- Discussing program recommendations that are presented by staff and/or sub-committees;
- Bringing forward issues for discussion and action by administration and/or the Board; and
- Sharing information about association activities and issues.

2. To participate in the annual review of the Special Education Plan. SEAC activities which support this role include:

- Participating in ad hoc committees involved in reviewing sections or parts of the Special Education Plan; and
- Reviewing changes to the plan and providing feedback to the staff and Board.

3. To participate in the annual budget process for Special Education.

SEAC activities which support this role include:

- Receiving one (1) or more presentations from administration about the budget process and key issues;
- Having the opportunity to ask questions, offer suggestions and provide feedback throughout the budget process; and
- Having the opportunity to make presentations to the budget committee or the Trustees about proposed expenditures or funding allocations.

4. To communicate with parents and members of the public about Special Education programs and services and the activities of SEAC.

SEAC activities which support this role include:

- Holding open meetings which members of the public can attend;
- Developing and distributing information about Special Education and SEAC;
- Distributing information and consulting with members of the associations represented by SEAC members;
- Participating in consultation between individual SEAC members and their respective provincial associations;
- Providing input into the Board website and publications which provide information about Special Education;
- Organizing and hosting information sessions with members of other SEAC's in the region; and
- Increasing awareness of Ministry of Education Special Education resources, including the Ministry of Education and SEAC websites.

5. To interact with other Ministries, community partners and agencies.

SEAC activities which support this role include:

- Responding to Ministry of Education consultations on Special Education policy and procedures;
- Responding to government consultations on programs and policies which may impact on students who require Special Education programs and services; and
- Consulting and collaborating with other Ministries, community partners and agencies regarding the development or changes in services and programs which may affect students who require Special Education.

MEETING TIMES / LOCATION

The SEAC meets from September to June of each school year. Meeting dates, times, locations, agendas and reports are posted on the Thames Valley District School Board website at <http://www.tvdsb.ca/> or available by calling the Thames Valley District School Board Education Centre at (519) 452-2000. Ministry of Education Regulation 181 requires SEAC to meet at least ten (10) times each year.

The SEAC occasionally will change the location and/or the time of the meeting for special purposes. The Committee meets at least ten (10) times in each school year; however additional meetings are also scheduled as needed. Meetings are open to the public.

PROCEDURES FOR THE SELECTION OF MEMBERS AND FILLING VACANCIES

The Education Act defines a local organization 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 (1) or more groups of exceptional children or adults" (O. Reg. 464/97, s.1).

The SEAC consists of no more than twelve (12) representatives who have been nominated by their local association (as defined above) and appointed by the Thames Valley District School Board to serve on this Committee. A representative cannot be an employee of the Board, and must be qualified to vote for members of the Board and be a resident in its area of jurisdiction. A representative is also appointed to represent the interests of First Nations students. One (1) alternate for each position is nominated and appointed to the Committee to serve if the representative is absent. Each person appointed to the Committee holds office during the term of office of the members of the Board.

Eligible associations and interested community agencies may nominate a representative to SEAC at the start of each SEAC term (which coincides with the election of school Board Trustees, every four [4] years) and when there is a vacant seat on SEAC. Letters of nomination must be sent to the Supervisor, Corporate Services, and appointments are made by the Trustees.

SEAC members are appointed by the Thames Valley District School Board Trustees for four (4) year terms. The Trustees of the Thames Valley District School Board may also appoint additional members to SEAC. Usually, the additional members of SEAC are representatives of community agencies that have an interest in the well-being of one (1) or more groups of exceptional children.

For a complete list of SEAC members and their contact information, please follow this link: <http://www.tvdsb.ca/board.cfm?subpage=212992>.

A member vacates his or her seat if he or she is convicted of an indictable offence, "is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings of the Committee and the alternate has not attended in their absence, or ceases to hold the qualifications to be appointed to the Committee. A member may be reinstated to the Committee by special resolution as per the Board bylaws located at: http://www.tvdsb.ca/files/filesystem/TVDSB_Bylaws_11Jan2011.pdf.

Where a seat of a member of the Committee is vacant, the alternate for the member acts in the member's place until such time as the position is filled. The Board shall appoint a qualified person to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term of the person whose seat or position has become vacant.

TERM OF OFFICE AND ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR / VICE-CHAIR

1. In accordance with legislation, the members appointed by the local associations to serve on the SEAC "... shall hold office during the term of office of the members of the Board."
2. The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair and shall act for the Chair at meetings in his or her absence.

3. The Chair or, in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, shall preside at meetings.
4. If at any meeting the Chair and Vice-Chair are not present, the members present may elect a Chair for that meeting.
5. The Chair may vote with the other members of the Committee. Any motion on which there is an equality of votes is lost.
6. The Committee shall elect its Chair and Vice-Chair at the first meeting following the Inauguration of the new Board and at the January meeting each of the next two (2) years. The process for election of these positions shall be the same manner as followed for the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board (attached) with the Superintendent of Student Achievement assuming the role of the Secretary of the Board until the SEAC Chair is elected.
7. The position of Chair shall alternate annually between a Trustee member and local association member. The Vice-Chair of the Committee shall be elected annually on the same basis, except that the Vice-Chair shall be elected from the group not represented by the Chair.
8. For meetings, the Chair of the SEAC shall carry out the duties of a Chair as outlined in Robert's Rules of Order.
9. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall determine who shall act as spokesperson and report recommendations to the Board.
10. The Chair, in consultation with the Vice-Chair, shall jointly be responsible for setting each meeting's agenda, in consultation with the appropriate staff members and the Superintendent of Student Achievement.

SEAC SUB-COMMITTEES

SEAC may appoint sub-committees as needed to further the business of the Committee.

SEAC MEMBERS / CONTACT INFORMATION

<http://www.tvdsb.ca/board.cfm?subpage=212992>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR SEAC MEMBERS

- **Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans**

On January 27, 2000, the Minister of Education announced the government's plans for improving the quality of Special Education programs and services in Ontario and for ensuring greater accountability in the area of Special Education. The document describes the new province-wide standards that school Boards must meet when developing their Special Education plans. The document can be found at:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/iepstand/iepstand.pdf>

- Ministry of Education *Standards for the Planning, Development and Implementation of Individual Education Plans (IEP's)* (2000). The document can be found at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/iep/iep.pdf>
- Ministry of Education *Transition Plan Resource Guide* (2002). The document can be found at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/transiti/transition.pdf>
- Thames Valley District School Board website: <http://www.tvdsb.ca>
- Thames Valley District School Board Education Plan can be found at: <http://www.tvdsb.ca/programs.cfm?subpage=122264>
- Individual Education Plan Resource Guide can be found at: <http://www.tvdsb.ca/files/filesystem/Resource%20Guide%20IEP%20Oct%2028%202009.pdf>
- Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE): <http://www.macse-on.ca>
- Ministry of Education Special Education Overview: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/speced.html>
- Provincial Parent Association Advisory Committee (PAAC) on SEAC Handbook: www.paac-seac.ca
- SEAC Training: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/seac/>
- Regulation 464/97: http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_970464_e.htm

A PREPARATION LIST FOR SEAC MEMBERS

From page 37 of the (Provincial Parent Associations Advisory Committee) PAaC on SEAC *Effective Practices Handbook for SEAC Members*:

http://www.paac-seac.ca/documents/FINAL%20PAAC%20ON%20SEAC%20Effective%20Practices%20Handbook%20October%2031%202010_SECURE.pdf

Table 4: Preparation Checklist for SEAC Meeting

The "W" Questions	The "HOW" Questions
Where is the meeting?	How do I contribute to SEAC?
When is the meeting?	How do I acquire information?
What is the purpose of the meeting?	How do I share information?
Why am I going?	How do I use the information?
What do I want to accomplish at the meeting?	How do I encourage others to participate?
What information should I take with me?	How do I encourage others to participate?
What information should I take with me?	How do I learn and listen effectively?
What Issues do I want discussed?	How do I encourage the Board and other SEAC members to investigate all options?
What am I going to report about my association?	How do I acquire feedback?
What information do I want to leave with after the meeting?	How do we support a process which will encourage feedback and follow through by SEAC members and the school Board Administration and Trustees?
What will I do with the information I have gained?	

SKILLS

1. Communication
2. Listening
3. Presentation
4. Assertiveness
5. Team Building
6. Decision-Making
7. Problem-Solving
8. Negotiation
9. Time Management
10. Research
11. Note Taking
12. Organization

COMMUNICATION TIPS

1. Ask yourself if your attitudes are getting in the way of communicating effectively.
2. Use concrete, specific words rather than abstractions in describing situations or in making requests.
3. Ask – if you are unclear about what has been said.
4. Don't use extremes such as always, never, etc.
5. Study the context. As well as through words, meaning is also conveyed in gestures, expression, tone of voice, body language.
6. Try to deal with facts, not assumptions, to avoid jumping to conclusions.
7. Be aware of any distractions within yourself that may interfere with your ability to listen.
8. Plan what you are going to say in order that it will be received, understood, and remembered.
9. Before beginning to read, identify what information you are trying to obtain, and what question you are trying to answer.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO BUILD CREDIBILITY

- Showing respect for people.
- Demonstrating honest and ethical behavior.
- Recognizing that I don't know it all, others have much to offer.
- Setting a good example.

- Showing a warm and caring attitude.
- Collaborating with others.
- Being loyal to people.
- Celebrating the successes.

SPECIAL EDUCATION DEFINITIONS

<http://www.tvdsb.ca/files/113529/acronym%20listing.pdf>

PROTOCOLS: AGENDAS, MEETINGS / MAKING MOTIONS

Agenda/Meeting:

- Call to Order: the Chair will call the meeting to order.
- Welcome and Introductions: all members should introduce themselves, particularly if new members or guests are present.
- Confirmation of Agenda: motion for approval should be made and seconded before additions or deletions are made. If the agenda is amended, it must then be moved and seconded.
- Conflicts of Interest: no member should vote on any issues if she/he appears to have a conflict of interest, particularly if the member stands to gain financially from the outcome.
- Approval of Minutes: motion for approval should be made and seconded.
- Business arising from minutes: points or issues listed on the current agenda should not be discussed at length during this segment of the agenda.
- Timed presentation(s): this is an opportunity to have a guest speaker, such as a representative from the Ministry of Education, a teacher or consulting staff to provide inservice for Committee members.
- Other agenda items: agenda items are presented for discussion and/or information purposes.
- Forum – Association Updates: this is an opportunity for SEAC members to report any items of interest in their local or provincial association or about a new development in the field of the exceptionality they represent, and/or they can announce conferences, general meetings, etc.
- Future Meeting Dates: all future meetings will be listed.
- Future Agenda Items: any future agenda items will be listed.
- Adjournment: motion to adjourn should be made.

Motions:

- Prepare motions in writing, in advance if at all possible and arrange in advance of meeting for another person to second the motion.
- A motion sheet should be provided which reads, "Moved by _____, Seconded by _____, that SEAC recommends to the Board that...."
- Only after the motion is made and seconded should it be discussed.
- When discussing the motion, members should preface their remarks with a statement of where they stand on the motion (e.g., "I support this motion for the following reasons" or, "I speak against this motion because..."). Members may challenge a motion on the grounds that it needs clarification.
- A member wishing to change a motion should preface his or her motion amendment with the statement, "I wish to amend the motion by adding the following word(s), or by removing the word(s)...., or changing the motion to read....." (before calling for a vote, the Chair should clarify that what is being voted on is the amendment to the motion).

The distribution of agendas, minutes, meeting materials, meeting refreshment orders and meeting room bookings/set-up are handled by the Corporate Services department.

Minute recording for SEAC is provided by the Assistant, Corporate Services.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES AT A GLANCE

To Do This: (1)	You Say This:	May You Interrupt Speaker?	Must You Be Seconded?	Is the Motion Debatable?	Is the Motion Amendable?	What Vote Is Required?
Adjourn the meeting (before all business is complete)	"I move that we adjourn."	May not interrupt speaker	Must be seconded	Not debatable	Not amendable	Majority vote
Recess the meeting	"I move that we recess until..."	May not interrupt speaker	Must be seconded	Not debatable	Amendable	Majority vote
Complain about noise, room temperature, etc.	"Point of privilege."	May interrupt speaker	No second needed	Not debatable (2)	Not amendable	None (3)
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move we table it."	May not interrupt speaker	Must be seconded	Not debatable	Not amendable	Majority vote
End debate	"I move the previous question."	May not interrupt speaker	Must be seconded	Not debatable	Not amendable	Two-thirds vote
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	May not interrupt speaker	Must be seconded	Debatable	Amendable	Majority vote
Have something studied further	"I move we refer this matter to a committee."	May not interrupt speaker	Must be seconded	Debatable	Amendable	Majority vote
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	May not interrupt speaker	Must be seconded	Debatable	Amendable	Majority vote
Introduce business (a primary motion)	"I move that..."	May not interrupt speaker	Must be seconded	Debatable	Amendable	Majority vote
PARLIAMENTARY PROC		May You Interrupt	Must You Be	Is the Motion	Is the Motion	What Vote Is

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PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES AT A GLANCE - CONTINUED

To Do This: (1)	You Say This:	May You Interrupt Speaker?	Must You Be Seconded?	Is the Motion Debatable?	Is the Motion Amendable?	What Vote Is Required?
Adjourn the meeting (before all business is complete)	"I move that we adjourn."	May not interrupt speaker	Must be seconded	Not debatable	Not amendable	Majority vote
Recess the meeting	"I move that we recess until..."	May not interrupt speaker	Must be seconded	Not debatable	Amendable	Majority vote
Complain about noise, room temperature, etc.	"Point of privilege."	May interrupt speaker	No second needed	Not debatable (2)	Not amendable	None (3)
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move we table it."	May not interrupt speaker	Must be seconded	Not debatable	Not amendable	Majority vote
End debate	"I move the previous question."	May not interrupt speaker	Must be seconded	Not debatable	Not amendable	Two-thirds vote
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	May not interrupt speaker	Must be seconded	Debatable	Amendable	Majority vote
Have something studied further	"I move we refer this matter to a committee."	May not interrupt speaker	Must be seconded	Debatable	Amendable	Majority vote
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	May not interrupt speaker	Must be seconded	Debatable	Amendable	Majority vote
Introduce business (a primary motion)	"I move that..."	May not interrupt speaker	Must be seconded	Debatable	Amendable	Majority vote
PARLIAMENTARY PROC To Do This: (4)	You Say This:	May You Interrupt Speaker?	Must You Be Seconded?	Is the Motion Debatable?	Is the Motion Amendable?	What Vote Is Required?
Object to procedure or	"Point of order."	May interrupt the speaker	No second needed	Not debatable	Not amendable	None (3)