



Section Seventeen

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)



Section 17 SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

What is SEAC?

SEAC is a standing committee of Lakehead District School Board established by the Ministry of Education under Regulation 464/97 s. 2(1). The purpose of the committee is to advise the Board about matters pertaining to the education of exceptional students. The Committee is composed of a representative from ten local associations/organizations dedicated to furthering the interests and well-being of exceptional children and adults. In addition, Lakehead District School Board appoints Trustees to sit on the committee.

SEAC members have identified the following as the most valued goal for their children's schooling:

To nurture the individual child's unique potential;
to allow full development
of each child's innate personal integrity, love of learning,
and creativity.

When does SEAC meet and who can attend?

The Special Education Advisory Committee meets at 6:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month to discuss and make recommendations to the Board in respect of matters affecting the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils. In addition, the committee participates in the annual review of the special education plan, takes part in the annual budget process and reviews financial statements that relate to special education.

Meetings are held in the boardroom of Lakehead District School Board at 2135 Sills Street. Parents/guardians, teachers, students and interested members of the public are welcome to attend. If individuals wish to attend, it is recommended that they contact the Board Office at 625-5100 to confirm the date and location.

How does SEAC Help Parents?

The Special Education Advisory Committee members are available to assist parents through the Identification, Placement and Review (IPRC) process and advocate on their behalf.

SEAC advocates help parents/students to help themselves by:

- supporting parents/students
- helping to resolve problems
- informing parents/students of their rights
- building confidence
- following up on concerns
- referring to appropriate agencies, and
- accompanying parents/students to meetings

What are the Roles and Responsibilities of SEAC?

SEAC is an integral component of Lakehead District School Board. SEAC has advised the Board and fulfilled its roles and responsibilities during the school year.

◆ Annual Review of Special Education Plans

In accordance with Regulation 306, each school and school authority is required to maintain its special education plan, to review it annually, to amend it when required, and to submit these amendments to the Minister on or before July 31st of each year. Regulation 464/97, the Board must ensure that its SEAC is involved in the annual review of the Board's Special Education Plan. SEAC supports the development of the Special Education Plan through a variety of venues: Ad Hoc Committees, monthly meeting, community information, etc.

◆ Professional Development

SEAC continues to support professional development for teachers, principals and facilitators. This year, SEAC members were again encouraged to participate in workshops specifically geared to SEAC members and their roles. Time was also put aside on each agenda to allow members to inform the rest of the group about any workshops that their respective associations may be hosting and to promote interest in workshops coming up in the community.

◆ Advocacy

Advocates, consisting of SEAC members, actively continued to assist students and their families within our schools. The names of the advocates are listed on the SEAC website and also available from the principal of each school.

◆ Budget

In accordance with regulation 464/97, the Board ensures that the SEAC is provided with the opportunity to participate in the Board's annual budget process as it relates to special education.

◆ SEAC Orientation

In order to reaffirm its role within Lakehead District School Board, SEAC held an orientation session that focused on:

- Background, role and mandate;
- Update on Board organization and roles;
- SEAC Checklist;
- Handbook for Members of Special Advisory Committees.

◆ Absenteeism

- The rules for SEAC member absenteeism were clarified according to Regulation 464/97 of the Education Act.

◆ Communication

SEAC makes a concerted effort to ensure ongoing communication by:

- maintaining and encouraging use of the SEAC website;
- developing a SEAC logo for use on official letterhead;
- distributing SEAC bookmarks to promote understanding of special needs

children in our community.

◆ Provincial/Board Involvement

The minutes from the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education are shared and discussed when received.

◆ Input to Budget Process

SEAC makes a concerted effort to advocate for exceptional students through:

- Sharing concerns regarding Special Education funding with OBSPA, OPSOA, and the provincial SEACs;
- Ongoing review of Ministry Regulation 464/97 pertaining to "Special Education Advisory Committee";
- Presenting to system and community groups in order to educate them on the role of SEAC and gather input for future directions;
- Providing input to System Direction Committee;
- Information sharing amongst the SEAC representatives and their organizations was ongoing in order to keep everyone updated on the activities and workshops of special needs children within our community.

*Ongoing Areas of focus that SEAC will continue to promote and review are:

- Authentic inclusion;
- Communication with community and system;
- Professional development of facilitators, teachers, SEAC members and other staff dealing with special needs children;
- Safe schools;
- Advocacy;
- Implementation activities related to programs and services supporting the learning of students with special needs;
- Decisions of the current government as they affect children with special needs and all children in the province;
- Community workshops and activities geared toward Special Education parents, caregivers, teachers and students;
- SEAC website;
- Goals and mandate of SEAC within Lakehead District School Board.

How do I get involved with SEAC?

Members of the public are always welcome as observers at the monthly SEAC meetings. If you have a keen interest in special education, you might wish to join one of the community parent support groups which are represented on SEAC and volunteer to be a SEAC delegate. Contact either the SEAC Chair or Vice Chair for more information.

How do I become a member of SEAC?

Lakehead District School Board invites interested organizations to submit applications for membership every four years, coinciding with municipal and Trustee elections. The term of membership coincides with the term for Trustees. A notice is posted in the local media and schools.

To qualify as a representative, a person must be:

- * a Canadian citizen;
- * the full age of eighteen years;
- * a resident within the jurisdiction of the Board; and
- * a public school elector

How to contact the Special Education Advisory Committee or for more information?

If you need assistance, please contact one of the SEAC advocates	Information may also be obtained by contacting Lakehead District School Board at 625-5100
◇ See link below for SEAC affiliations and telephone numbers. Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Lakehead Public Schools (lakeheadschools.ca)	◇ Michelle Probizanski, Superintendent of Education ◇ Lori Carson, Special Education Officer ◇ Christine Jones, Executive Secretary

Letters can be addressed to the Special Education Advisory Committee

Special Education Advisory Committee
c/o Lakehead District School Board
2135 Sills Street
Thunder Bay, Ontario
P7E 5T2