

# Special Education Advocacy - The Role of SEAC

Lakehead Public Schools

Committed to the success of every student

[www.lakeheadschoos.ca](http://www.lakeheadschoos.ca)



## Special Education Advisory Committee



The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) are representatives from various local support associations/agencies, parents/guardians, or community members who have voluntarily agreed to support families as they navigate the Special Education system.

Families may choose to contact an advocate any time they feel that they need extra support in understanding or contributing to their child's special education program. Use of an advocate early in the process may prevent difficulties later on.

### Confidentiality

Every family is treated with respect and dignity. All personal information will be treated as confidential.

### Purpose

- Assist families as they navigate the special education and programs;
- Share expertise and information;
- Guide families in making informed decisions;
- Build and maintain relationships between families and schools; and
- Be a part of the team that supports every exceptional pupil in the special education programs.

### Advocates

#### Learn

- More about the child's (strengths, needs, likes, dislikes);
- About the child's school experience; and
- About the family situation and needs.

#### Share

- Information;
- Contact numbers of people or agencies who can assist; and
- Tips to navigate the system.

#### Support

- Be a listening ear;
- Attend meetings as a support to families if possible;
- Help to access services or equipment;
- Help parents/guardians to interpret or understand documents (IEP, Assessments, IPRC);
- Support parental input into IEP's;
- Help parents/guardians to create a portfolio for the student (see Transitions Handbook);
- Help parents/guardians feel comfortable in the school setting;
- Help to resolve issues; and
- Create a list of questions the parent/guardian wants to ask.



## Special Education Advocacy

### The Role of the SEAC Advocate

#### More Information

[www.lakeheadschoools.ca](http://www.lakeheadschoools.ca)

(807) 625-5126

### Supporting Parents/Guardians

If a member is contacted by a family or the school, advocates should follow the process outlined below.

**Listen** to the concerns of the family.

#### Investigate

The advocate will explore the situation and determine the dynamics by answering the following questions:

##### Who has the family spoken with and what was the outcome?

- ask if the parent/guardian/caregiver has spoken to the teacher
- ask if the parent/guardian/caregiver has spoken to the facilitator
- ask if the parent/guardian/caregiver has spoken to the Vice Principal/Principal

**If they respond that they have spoken with the above staff, ask what the outcome(s) of the discussions has been.**

##### What does the family want to accomplish?

- program change, acquire equipment, extra support, etc.

**Analyse** the situation in relation to the protocol and the comfort level of the parents/guardians/caregiver. Seek out information or knowledge to educate the parents/guardians/caregiver.

#### Respond

Help the parent/guardian to follow the chain of communication. The ideal goal is to resolve concerns at the school level. If this is not possible, advise the parent/guardian/caregiver to contact the System Principal, Special Education at (807) 625-5170.

#### Outcomes

The advocate will strive to help to resolve concerns with the intention of achieving:

- The best possible educational experience for the student;
- Balance and student success; and
- A positive, supportive relationship between the family and the school.

