SPECIAL EDUCATION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)

The Education Act section 57.1 requires every district school board and school authority to establish a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). The details relating to the functions and mandates of SEAC are in Regulation 464/97.

PURPOSE OF A SEAC

The role of a SEAC as set out in the governing legislation is to:
…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. Regulation 464/97. s11(1)

Before making a decision about any recommendation, the board is required to provide an opportunity for the SEAC to be heard before the board and any committee to which the recommendation has been referred. SEAC functions in an advisory capacity. SEAC makes recommendations to the board by way of motions passed at meetings and may also attend before the board to make representations.

In addition, the board must ensure that the SEAC is provided with the opportunity to:

- participate in the annual review of its special education plan
- participate in the annual budget process to the extent that it relates to special education
- review the financial statements of the board as they relate to special education.

COMPOSITION OF A SEAC

Regulation 464/97 sets out in detail who is to be appointed to a SEAC. A school board appointed SEAC must consist of:

a) one representative from each of the local associations that operates locally, provided that no more than 12 representatives will be appointed
b) one alternate from each of the local associations who has a representative appointed
c) a set number of representatives from the board, determined in accordance with the regulation
d) if the number of board representatives appointed under a subsection (c) is less than three, one alternate from the board

e) One or two members to represent the interests of First Nations students attending board schools under a tuition agreement,
f) one or more additional members appointed by the board at their discretion who are neither representatives of local association or members of the board or another committee of the board. [Regulation 464/97, s2(1)].

The number of school board representatives is equal to either 25% of the total number of board members (rounded down) or 3, whichever is less.

A SEAC established by a school authority has a reduced number of local association and authority representatives: 2 local association representatives (and one alternate) and 1 authority representative (and one alternate).

As of June 27, 2025, the Minister of Education placed the TCDSB under Ministry supervision. While under supervision, all decisions that would normally be made by the Board of Trustees, with the exception of denominational matters, will now be made by the Ministry Appointed Supervisor.

LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

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. [Regulation 64/97, s1]

A SEAC may not have more than 12 local association representatives. If more than 12 seek appointment to the SEAC, the board is to decide which 12 will be represented.

Local association members and alternates are nominated by the association and appointed by the local board or authority. Appointment by the board is generally automatic upon nomination by the local association.

ELIGIBILITY FOR NOMINATION

To be eligible, a nominee must be qualified to vote for members of the board, which means that he or she must be:

- a Canadian citizen
- 18 years of age or older a local resident
- qualified as an elector of that board and not eligible to vote for members of another board (for example, French language school board) and must not be an employee of the board in question.

A member or alternate will automatically lose his or her seat if he or she:

- is convicted of an indictable offence and the time for appeal has lapsed or an appeal has been unsuccessful
- misses three consecutive meetings which he or she is required to attend unless authorized to do so by the SEAC, as evidenced by a resolution entered in the minutes
- no longer meets the requirements for membership as set out above.

When a vacancy occurs, a replacement member will be appointed in accordance with the general regulations. The replacement will be drawn from the same category or member as the person he or she is replacing. Until a replacement has been appointed, the alternate is required to attend the meetings.

TERM OF APPOINTMENT

A SEAC is appointed for the same duration as the board. Each member who remains eligible for membership retains his or her position until a new board is organized.

MEETINGS OF THE SEAC

The SEAC must meet at least 10 times a year. Members are required to attend all meetings of the SEAC. When a member cannot attend, he or she must advise the alternate, who is then required to attend that meeting. As set out above, failure to attend three consecutive meetings will result in the member being removed.

Meetings may be held electronically. Specific regulations govern the holding of electronic meetings and these requirements must be met for a valid electronic meeting to be held [Regulation 463/97].

At the first meeting of a new SEAC, a chair and vice-chair must be elected. The chair, and in his or her absence, the vice-chair are responsible for the running of meetings. If neither the chair nor vice- chair is present at a meeting, the remaining members must elect a person to act as chair for that meeting.

Each member (including the chair and vice-chair), or his or her alternate, has one vote. All decisions of the SEAC must be made by a majority of the members present. Where a vote is even, the motion fails.

Quorum for a meeting is a majority of the total number of members. For example, if the SEAC consists of 17 members (12 local association representatives, 3 trustees and 2 community members), quorum would be 9 people in attendance at a meeting.

ASSISTANCE OF THE BOARD

The board has established a policy regarding the appointment and operation of SEAC which is in accordance with legislative requirements. The board is complying with the legislative requirements with regard to SEAC.

The board is required to make available to the SEAC "the personnel and facilities that the board considers necessary for the proper functioning of the committee". [Regulation 464/97,s20(1)].

The board is also required to provide the members and alternate members of the SEAC with information and orientation respecting:

- the role of the committee and of the board in relation to special education EDU and board
- policies relating to special education

The SEAC of the TCDSB willingly shares with interested parties information about upcoming conferences and workshops.

The memberships is also keenly interested and promotes new partnerships and initiatives. Presentations at the monthly meetings are a means of information.

SEAC MEETINGS

SEAC meetings are public and may be attended in person at the Catholic Education Centre at 80 Sheppard Avenue East.

The dates of the upcoming SEAC meetings can be found on the TCDSB website. Past agendas are available on the board website. https://www.tcdsb.org/page/board-committee-meetings

Parents may delegate at a SEAC meeting. For information regarding delegations, please contact the Recording Secretary, Sophia Harris: Sophia.Harris@tcdsb.org

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC) MEMBERSHIP AS OF JULY 2025

Melanie Battaglia *Autism Ontario, Toronto Chapter – alternate*	Melanie.Battaglia@tcdsb.org
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Lisa McMahon *Community Representative*	Lisa.McMahon@tcdsb.org
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