



Small Schools Make a Difference

SUPERIOR-GREENSTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE S.E.A.C.

Terms of Reference

Latest Revision April 12, 2022



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A - INTRODUCTION	3
B - REGULATION 464/97	6
C - DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEE	7
D - WORKING CONDITIONS.....	9
E - BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES	10
F - SEAC MEETINGS	10
G - QUALIFICATION FOR MEMBERS	11
H - MEMBERSHIP IN SEAC	14
I - CONTACT INFORMATION	14



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SUPERIOR-GREENSTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Our Mission

At SGDSB, we are learners. Everything we do is designed to help all students succeed and make a difference. We build positive places for learning and working...together.

Our Vision

Inspiring our students to succeed and make a difference.

A - Introduction

The Superior-Greenstone District School Board will provide the best education possible within its means for each of its students. The Board supports a philosophy of integration within the schools provided that it meets the needs of the student and is in accordance with parent/guardian wishes. Our basic premise is that all teachers share responsibility to meet the needs of all students. Students with exceptionalities within the board's jurisdiction (regardless of exceptionality) can access services through placement in:

- The regular classroom setting.
- The regular classroom setting with resource services to the classroom teacher or student.
- The regular classroom setting with the assistance of a special education support person.
- The regular classroom setting with resource assistance or resource withdrawal from a special education resource teacher when deemed necessary.
- A self-contained classroom for a portion of the day with integration into the regular classroom.

The placement goal for all students with exceptionalities is to keep them as close to the regular classroom program as possible, with appropriate special education programs and services in place when/where deemed necessary. The ultimate goal is inclusion in the regular classroom, with withdrawal of students to develop specific skills necessary for meaningful inclusion and specialized support to meet the goals of the IEP.



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Through their learning experiences, students develop a sense of self-worth and dignity as members of the school community and are able to make a useful contribution in a complex and changing society. Inherent in these beliefs is the recognition that all students, regardless of exceptionality, are entitled to an education in the most enabling and supportive environment.

Our Inclusive Approach to Special Education

Our Board actively promotes inclusion programming, where students with special needs fully participate in the life of the school community. Wherever possible, students are educated in regular classrooms with age-appropriate peers. Inclusion is the student's feeling of belonging, in a community of learning that honours equality, student diversity and respect. This commitment is shared with the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Superior-Greenstone District School Board.

As a result of our inclusive approach to special education, the program delivery is rooted in a seamless approach to service students with special education needs from their early years to graduation.

As advocates for students with exceptionalities in the Superior-Greenstone District School Board, members of SEAC work co-operatively with Board staff to affect constructive change for students with exceptionalities. Through a collaborative effort, members work as a team to develop a shared focus to represent the needs of all students with exceptionalities.

Acting in an advisory capacity, SEAC reports and makes recommendations to the school board relative to any matter affecting the establishment or development of special education programs and services for students with exceptionalities.

Members of SEAC also facilitate effective communication between their association members and the school board. By acquiring and maintaining a working knowledge of special education programs and services provided by the Superior-Greenstone District School Board, members inform their associations of the activities of SEAC and the Board.

The Superior-Greenstone District School Board SEAC plays a vital role in ensuring that students with exceptionalities receive appropriate education services. The ultimate goal of this committee is to improve the educational opportunities for all students with exceptionalities.

All SGDSB staff are responsible for upholding and promoting human rights for the benefit of students, staff, their families and communities. We advocate for human rights and equity to meet the needs of diverse individuals served by the Superior-Greenstone District School Board.



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All staff work to create and maintain a safe, inclusive, accessible, harassment and discrimination-free environment for all.

We are responsible for taking a human rights-based approach to education to ensure every child a quality education that respects and promotes her or his right to dignity and optimum development. We respect the Ontario Human Rights Code by recognizing:

- The inherent dignity and worth of individuals.
- Equal rights and opportunity.
- The need for a climate of understanding and mutual respect, so each person feels a part of the community and is able to participate fully.

We hold ourselves responsible “to embrace and celebrate the diverse identities that students bring with them to school and offer curricula that will enable them to develop with their identities fully intact, with a sense of belonging.” (MYSP. Pg. 7)



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B - REGULATION 464/97 SEPCIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)

Each Board in the Province of Ontario is required to establish a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) as defined in Ontario Regulation 464/97 made under the Education Act, Special Education Advisory Committees.

Membership

Each district school board ***shall*** establish a SEAC that ***shall*** consist of:

- **1 representative** from each local association that operates locally within the area of the jurisdiction of the Board.
 - No more than 12;
 - Nominated by the local association;
 - Appointed by the Board.

Where no local association or associations have been established, instead of the above, the Board ***shall*** appoint two members who are not members of the Board.

- **2 members** of the Board, appointed from their own members.
- **1 person to represent the interest of First Nations or Indigenous students**, nominated by the councils of the bands, and nominated by the Board.

Alternates

All of the above are to have alternates, nominated and appointed under the same rules as the members.

Each district school board **may** have:

- **1 or more members** who are neither representatives of a local association nor members of the Board or another committee of the Board.



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C - Duties of Committee

The SEAC 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.

Expectations for SEAC Members

The Special Education Advisory Committee must conduct its business having regard to the interests of all students with exceptionalities in the board. It is essential that every SEAC member consider the needs of all exceptional students in a positive, honest and respectful manner.

Each member is expected to:

- Respect the right to privacy of individual exceptional pupils.
- Acquire and maintain a working knowledge of the special education programs and services provided by the board for all exceptionalities.
- Represent and inform SEAC about the association he/she represents (where the member is appointed as a representative of a local association).
- Act at all times with civility and respect for all other SEAC members and SGDSB staff.
- Recognize and respect the contributions, concerns, questions and opinions of SEAC members, invitees and SGDSB staff.
- Act in accordance with the Provincial Code of Conduct which is applicable to all members of the school community as well as the Board's Code of Conduct.
- Act in accordance with Policy 707 Employee Code of Conduct.

Duties of SEAC Members

- Attendance at all SEAC meetings. Members are to confirm their attendance at all meetings at the time the electronic agenda is forwarded. The Committee shall meet at least 10 times per year.
- Respond to the needs of all students with exceptionalities via their participation in SEAC.
- Participate in the review of the Board's Annual Special Education Plan.
 - This annual review takes place at the June SEAC meeting.



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- Review and provide input into the Board's Special Education budget.
 - The budget for the upcoming school year is presented annually at the June SEAC meeting.
- Review the Board's Financial Statements.
 - A presentation by the Superintendent of Business is made to SEAC in the Fall of each year.
- Review and give feedback to any policies impacting students with special needs during the Stakeholder Review Stage.
- Respect the privacy of students by avoiding discussion of individual students.
- Ensure that an alternate attends meeting in their absence.
- Participate in other activities, including, but not limited to:
 - Reviewing the proposed school year calendar.
 - Participating in professional development sessions.
 - Represent their local association.
- Makes recommendations to the board regarding, but not limited to:
 - Annual Special Education Plan.
 - Special Education Budget.
 - Any matter affecting the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the Board.

SEAC Alternates

As SEAC Alternates, members are able and welcome to:

- Attend and participate fully in SEAC meetings with the exception of making a motion or voting which is the responsibility of the member.
- Attend SEAC meetings as a member if the appointed member is unable to attend
- Communicate with other SEAC members regarding issues related to special education supports and services.
- Volunteer to participate on any SEAC Sub-Committees.

Attendance

- It is the responsibility of a member to contact an alternate if they are going to be absent.



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- All members are required to confirm their attendance by the Friday, 4 days prior to the SEAC meeting by 4 pm.

Trustees

As members of SEAC, Trustees are expected to:

- Attend monthly SEAC meetings.
- Ensure the Board complies with ministry legislation, regulations, and board policies/procedures relevant to special education.
- Ensure that funds provided by the province for special education, are spent within the envelope requirements.
- Champion special education at the Board table.
- Inform SEAC of issues coming before the Board that may impact special education supports and services.
- Participate in the annual review (i.e. budget, special education plan etc.).
- Ensure that an alternate trustee attends the SEAC meeting in their absence.

D- Working Conditions

- A majority of the members of the committee is a quorum.
- A vote of the majority of members present bind the committee.
- Every member (or alternate if sitting for member) has a vote.
- At the first meeting in January, members shall elect a chair and a vice-chair from among their members.
- Vice-chair acts for the chair in their absence.
- If chair and vice-chair are absent, then the members present elect a chair for that meeting.
- Chair may vote with the members of committee on any motion.
- Any motion on which there is equality of votes, is lost.
- The committee shall meet at least 10 times per year.
- Where members cannot attend a meeting, they are to inform their alternate if they have one.
- Where an alternate attends in place of the appointed member, he/she acts in the member's place but do not have voting capabilities.



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E - Board Responsibilities to the SEAC

The Board shall:

- Make available the personnel and facilities that the Board considers necessary for the proper functioning of the committee.
- Include personnel necessary to permit the use of electronic means for holding meetings.
- Provide members and alternates with information and orientation with respect to:
 - The roles of committee and of Board re: Special Education.
 - The Ministry and Board policy relating to Special Education.
- Ensure that the committee has an opportunity:
 - To be heard before the Board/Committee to which the recommendation is referred.
 - To participate in the Annual Special Education Plan Review.
 - To take part in the Board's budget process in Special Education.
 - To review the Board's Special Education financial statements.

F- SEAC Meetings

All SEAC meetings are open to the general public and may take place by teleconference, videoconference, face-to-face, or a combination of the three methods. Meetings normally take place the second Tuesday of the month from 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm.

Communication

- Parent/guardian input is received through association reports that are a consistent agenda item for each SEAC meeting. Letters for SEAC are received at the Board Office.

Accessibility

- Accessibility Policy 719 is followed. Anyone who does not have access to a computer or internet can contact their closest SGDSB school in order to join the SEAC meeting virtually, in the Video Conference Room.



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Agenda:

- The agenda will be prepared collaboratively by the Multi-Disciplinary Team and sent by email to SEAC members 7 days prior to the meeting.
- Minutes of each meeting will be kept. Minutes will be approved by SEAC and reported to a regular meeting of the Board.
- Recommendations from SEAC to the Board will be contained in the minutes reported to the Board.

Timelines of Reports and Agenda Items

- Board reports must be in written format.
- Board reports and presentations for SEAC must be submitted to the Secretary of the SEAC meetings on the Monday, 8 days prior, to the SEAC meeting, by 4 pm.
- The agenda, Board Report and presentations will be sent by email to all members on the Tuesday, 7 days prior, to the SEAC meeting by 4 pm.
- The minutes will be sent out to each member on the Friday, 3 days after the SEAC meeting by 4 pm. The SEAC meeting agenda and minutes will be posted on the board website.

G- Qualifications for Members and Alternates

- The person is qualified to vote for members of the Board and is a resident of its area of jurisdiction (does not apply to First Nations representation).
- The person may not be employed by the Board.

Selection of SEAC Members

- The Board advertises in the local newspaper and social media for persons interested in sitting on the SEAC to apply to the Board in writing. The Board determines the member's eligibility and the agencies and affiliations that they represent.



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SEAC Chair and Vice Chair

- Members shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair from among their members. The Vice Chair acts in the absence of the Chair.
- If both the Chair and the Vice Chair are absent from a meeting, the members in attendance elect a Chair for that meeting.

Quorum and Voting

- A majority of the members of the committee is a quorum. A meeting must have quorum in order to be a “voting” meeting. If quorum is not met, the members may decide to proceed with an “information meeting” only.
- A vote of the majority of the members present binds the committee.
- Every member, or alternate if sitting for a member, has a vote.
- The Chair may vote with the SEAC members on any motion.
- Any motion that has an equality of votes is lost.

Term of Office

- SEAC members shall hold office during the term of the Board and until a new board is organized.
- Elections will take place at the January SEAC meeting
- The Inaugural meeting each year will be the December SEAC meeting

Vacancies

- When the Board appoints a person to fill a vacancy, the Board must ensure that the individual is qualified.

Disqualifications

A SEAC member is disqualified if he/she:

- Is convicted of an indictable offence (shall not fill until appeal time has elapsed or appeal has been heard, if quashed no vacancy).



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- Is absent, without being authorized by resolution entered in the minutes, from 3 consecutive regular meetings of the committee.
- Ceases to hold the qualifications to be appointed to the committee.

Conflict of Interest

- **Policy 723:** It is the policy of the Superior-Greenstone District School Board that Employees, Volunteers and Trustees are required to disclose any potential or actual conflicts of interest that could compromise, or be perceived to compromise, their objectivity and judgment to their immediate supervisor immediately upon becoming aware in writing of the actual or potential conflict of interest. As such, employees and volunteers may be required to excuse themselves from any duty or transaction where they have, or may appear to have, a conflict of interest that could compromise, or be perceived to compromise, their objectivity and judgement.



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H - Membership in SEAC

The Act stipulates that:

A SEAC for a district school board is composed of the following:

- Representatives and alternates for these representatives from up to 12 local associations. The local associations must be affiliated with associations or organizations that:
 - Are incorporated.
 - Operate throughout Ontario.
 - Further the interests and well-being of one or more groups of exceptional children or adults.
 - Do not represent professional educators.
- The lesser of 3 or 25 percent of the total number of board trustees rounded down to the nearest whole number.
- Where 1 or 2 board trustees are appointed to the SEAC, each trustee has an alternate appointed. However, where the number is 3 or greater, there are no alternates appointed.
- One or two persons to represent the interests of First Nations students attending board schools under an Education Service Agreement.
- One or more additional members, sometimes called members at large, may be appointed who are neither representatives of a local association nor trustees of another committee of the Board.
- Alternates for local association members can attend and participate in SEAC meetings if the local association member cannot be present.

I – Contact information

For contact information, please visit the Superior-Greenstone Website at: www.sgdsb.on.ca