

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board Newsletter

What is SEAC?

Ottawa is a city of meetings and committees. And the Ottawa Carleton District School Board is no exception. But there's one school board committee that you may not know about. And if you're the parent of a school-aged child with a learning exceptionality or special needs, you should definitely know about it. The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC for short) acts as an advisor and sounding board for the school board in areas that have an impact on your special needs child.

What kind of topics does the SEAC discuss?

Here are a few examples: are there adequate safety measures for school transportation (and not just the big yellow buses); how well are high school students with learning exceptionalities being prepared for life after high school; are special needs students more likely to be suspended from school. You can see that the range of topics is wide and the quality of the discussion is impressive, as well.

So who are the members of the SEAC?

You can reach anyone of us on the Board's website at <http://www.ocdsb.ca/ab-ocdsb/bm/com/Pages/aeac.aspx> Some of us represent associations; some of us represent the community in general. All of us are keenly interested in ensuring that all OCDSB children receive the best possible education, no matter what their abilities or challenges.

SEAC holds monthly meetings of its members; usually on the last Wednesday of every month school is in session. These meetings are public and there are opportunities to ask a question or make a delegation. The agenda is published in advance. School board staff, both in administrative and in professional capacities, support these monthly SEAC meetings.

For more information on SEAC look at the SEAC Handbook: http://www.ocdsb.ca/med/pub/Publications%20%20Updated/SEAC_Handbook.pdf

Please Share this Newsletter

Post a copy on the parent bulletin board

Put a copy in the teacher's lounge

Child's Speech Skills Important

Speech skills are extremely important to good communication. Good communication is important for many reasons but critical to the development of literacy skills and future academic success as well as social development.

What Parents Can Do

Talk to the classroom teacher to see if your child participates orally in the classroom. Sometimes when children are aware of their articulation difficulties they prefer to speak only to a few friends rather than in front of a whole group.

- Listen to your child speak with their peers, siblings, and other adults. Listen to see if your child is understood by everyone or if they have to keep repeating what they have said.
- Review the impact that your child's speaking has on their reading, spelling, and writing. Do you see the same errors in their printing as their speech errors? For example, are they printing 'wed' instead of 'red'?
- Check your child's hearing. Sometimes fluctuating hearing due to fluid, wax, etc. can have a significant impact on your child's speech production.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's speech sound production abilities, please call your child's teacher or contact the speech and language pathologist serving your child's school.

The School board also has the *Parent Articulation Training Program* designed to teach parents how they can help their children overcome mild articulation difficulties through training and proper resources for home use. There is a training workshop Thursday May 30, 2013.

For more information:

<http://www.ocdsb.ca/programs/se/ParentArticulationTraining/Pages/default.aspx>

Question & Answer Session Individual Education Plan (IEP) Identification and Placement Review Committee (IPRC)

Monday May 13th: 7pm to 9:30pm at Woodroffe H.S. - Presented by Lamar Mason

An IPRC document that accurately identifies your child's strengths and needs is an invaluable aid in determining what measures should be put in place for your child's education.

Do you fully understand what the IEP is supposed to achieve?

Is it **SMART**?

(Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely)

What can you do to help to make your child's IEP as good as it can be?

Questions? Contact: ocasc.seac@ocasc.ca

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Free Workshop March 22, 2013

Transition to Secondary School Strategies to Support Students with ASD

This workshop is being presented by the *Ottawa Children's Coordinated Access & Referral Services* and the *Ministry of Children and Youth Services*

Please register with Cathy Lonergan by email cathy@coordinatedaccess.ca or by calling 613-729-0577 ext. 1254



Fast Fact

Learning Support Teacher

While the primary responsibility for students with special education needs lies with the classroom teacher, a Learning Support Teacher (LST) is also available in each school in the OCDSB, and serves a number of roles to meet the needs of these students. These roles may include:

- working directly with the teacher and/or providing consultation support to help the teacher meet the needs of students;
- working directly with students, including in small groups, to support their development of specific skills; and
- performing administrative duties related to special education in the school, such as conducting educational assessments, developing and implementing Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and coordinating Individual Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) processes.

Ask the teacher or school principal about the LST at your child's school, and how you can connect with the LST to learn more about strategies, resources and supports to help your child succeed.

ABC Take-off!

The ABC Take-off program, hosted by the ABC Ottawa (Association for Bright Children), provides challenging extracurricular educational opportunities for bright and gifted students, ranging in age from 6 - 14 years on Saturday mornings for six weeks in the spring and fall.

The next session is;

Spring 2013 ABC Take-off - April 6 - May 11, 2013 at St. Paul's High School. Registration begins March 7, 2013, evening at Ron Kolbus Lakeside Centre. For more information, go to <http://www.abcontario.ca/ottawa/44>

Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders

*The voice for children:
often for children who do not have a voice of their own*

Here's a question for you. What is the most common disability that children entering the school system deal with? If you said speech or language (communication) problems, you would go to the head of the class. So what really does that mean? A communication disorder is an ongoing difficulty in the understanding (comprehension) and/or use (expression) of spoken or written language.

Up to 30% of all kindergarten students, and approximately 10% of school children overall, have a speech or language impairment. That is a significant number. If your child is one those students struggling this way, you likely know how important it is to get help for your child and to be your child's advocate. You can get support and assistance from one of the associations sitting on the SEAC for the Ottawa Board. The Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders (OAFCCD) has just produced a new resource that will help you be the best advocate possible for your child with a communication disorder.

OAFCCD can help you get information about communication disorders. It can also guide you to where speech and language services are available and who is eligible. There are also hands-on tips that you can use to help your child at home and to advocate for your youngster in school.

Want to know more? Your first stop is the website at www.oafccd.com. You'll find fact sheets and tips available at no cost. Just help yourself. There is also a wonderful parent guide that will help you successfully navigate your child through the school system from kindergarten to graduation. The brand-new DVD builds on the parent guide and offers tips on how to work positively with the teachers and the school for your child's success. The parent guide and the DVD are available for a small cost.

Do you want to talk to OAFCCD's representative on SEAC? Just contact Joyce Mortimer at ckingmortimer@hotmail.ca

Families Matter Co-operative Inc.

For and about people with developmental disabilities

Mar. 23, 2013, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. - Cost: Free

The workshop is an introduction which will widen and strengthen circle of friends or personal support networks that will make lives better now and sustain a good life into the future.

Facilitated by: Gerald and Elizabeth Bloomfield.

Registration: on or before March 15, 2013.

Details at <http://www.familiesmattercoop.ca>

Location: 312 Parkdale Avenue, Citizen Advocacy Office