

SEAC NEWS

Events & Resources

What is SEAC?

The Special Education Advisory Committee to the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board helps ensure exceptional pupils receive the programs and services they need.

Parent Conference

On January 16, 2016, come see Peg Dawson, author of *Smart but Scattered*, and share info and ideas about helping your kids at home and school. This free conference is hosted by the OCDSB Parent Involvement Committee (PIC). SEAC is excited to offer workshops on issues such as IEPs, university transitions, and financial aid.

Transition Guides

Try out the new Parent's Tips and Tricks, helping families in special education make a smoother transition to high school.

Gifted Program Review

Launched this fall, gifted supports are the next to be considered under the Board's Cyclical Review of Programming. Stay tuned for consultations!



Learning Disabilities Review

About 5-10% of people have learning disabilities (LD) that affect reading, writing or math. Not surprisingly, LDs form the largest group of identified students in the Board. A newly-released Board report recommends three major areas of change, to provide earlier and more targeted support, to more children:

- (1) **Enhance support for early identification & intervention:** includes making the Empower Reading Program, and targeted reading and math LD screening and intervention, available in every elementary school.
- (2) **Modify structure of specialized elementary LD classes:** based on a one-year intensive, half-day semi-integrated model, with more strategically-located 5/6 and 7/8 classes that focus on specific student needs.
- (3) **Building teacher capacity:** in regular and specialized classrooms, as well as enhanced Assistive Technology support.

The intent is to serve children with LDs in inclusive classrooms, reducing the need for specialized programs. The critical next step is to identify ways to build the resources and teacher capacity to support LDs in all schools. A consultation for parents of children in (or wait listed for) specialized classes will be announced after January 19th.



Member updates

OAFCCD News

Contact the Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders ([OAFCCD](#)) for information and supports to those caring for children with speech, language, and other disorders that impair communication. They also invite your views and experiences in the ongoing development of Ontario's new [Special Needs Strategy](#).

Easter Seals News

Easter Seals Ontario provides programs and services - including two summer camps! - for children and youth with physical disabilities, to help them achieve greater independence, accessibility and integration. Check out [Easter Seals Kids at School](#) for great info on everything from IPRCs to high school transitions. Also, join us in congratulating Clifford Bowey School on their new fully accessible senior playground!

Strategic Plan and Budget 2016

SEAC invites you to take a look at some of the key items on our fall agenda, the [OCDSB Student Achievement Report \(SAR\)](#) and the closely-linked [Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement \(BIPSA\)](#). Together with the Board's new [Strategic Plan](#), these documents define the priorities and needs that will drive budget decisions this winter and spring.

The OCDSB has been drawing on reserve funds to provide services beyond those enabled by provincial funding. However, 2015-16 starts a three-year process to reduce the deficit and bring Board expenditures in line with Ministry funding. This winter, SEAC will be working hard with the Board to help [build a budget](#) that uses our resources most effectively to meet students' needs. Delegations to SEAC are always welcome.

From the Chair

SEAC is pleased to welcome two new members: Community Representative Tina Morden, and Trustee Erica Braunovan. Our thanks go to our departing Trustee, Donna Blackburn.

I would also like to thank all those who help support Ottawa students with special needs. Particular appreciation this fall goes to System Vice-Principal Christine Kessler for her support of the new Transition Guide, and to Trustee Chris Ellis for his efforts to incorporate special education considerations in the Board's new Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines.

SEAC members include associations, community representatives and Trustees. To learn more about special education in the OCDSB, see the [overview](#), as well as the Board's guides to [Individual Education Plans](#) and the [Identification, Placement, and Review Process](#).

I wish you all the best for the New Year.

Rob Kirwan
SEAC Chair



Want to see all the links, or learn more about SEAC and special education? Visit us at:

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