

SEAC NEWS

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Newsletter

Coming in 2015/16

What is SEAC?

The Special Education Advisory Committee to the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board recommends ways to help exceptional pupils receive the programs and services they need. Members include associations, community, and Trustees.

Parent events

Keep your eyes out for a Parent Workshop this winter, hosted by the [OCDSB Parent Involvement Committee](#) (PIC). SEAC is working with PIC to build in sessions and resources for parents addressing their questions and needs in special education.

Learning Disability (LD) Review

The Board is engaged in a [review of its learning disability programming](#), prior to transition to the Geographic model of delivery (see article to right). The upcoming report will address both new [provincial LD policy](#) as well as parental input. *More info on the provincial policy also at [Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario](#).*



New approach to locating and placing in Specialized Classes

In 2013, the OCDSB began implementing a new [special education policy](#). It involves two major changes: the Geographic Model and Superintendency Based IPRCs for placement into specialized programs. The intent is to better serve students by moving them closer to home and addressing the wait-list issue.

So far, the new model has been implemented for the Dual Support Program and the Autism Program. Four new classes have been added to meet need in the Autism Program.

Planning is now underway to implement the Geographic Model for Learning Disabilities in 2016 (review ongoing, see sidebar) and for the Gifted Program in 2017 (review of Gifted Programming to be launched in 2015-16).



Special Needs Strategy

The OCDSB is working with health system partners to better coordinate services for children with disabilities. The draft "Ottawa Model" is due this fall.

Transition Guides

This fall's new *Parent's Tips and Tricks* and an updated *Teacher's Guide to Transition* will help families with the transition from elementary to secondary school.

Special education in the regular classroom

In keeping with provincial policy, children with special needs are increasingly served in regular classrooms. SEAC is working with the Board to strengthen tiered intervention, differentiation and Universal Design, which all support struggling students.

Math learning disabilities

Learning disabilities don't just affect reading! SEAC and the OCDSB are working to integrate dyscalculia supports into the Board's Numeracy Plan.

Budget Challenges

The 2015-16 OCDSB budget was passed in June, resulting in cuts to some Special Education staff. These include Learning Support and Learning Resources teachers (LST, LRT), psychological services, and Emergency Educational Assistant services. Four new teachers were added for new Autism classes. Budget constraints will continue for the foreseeable future. SEAC continues to review the budgetary situation and to provide constructive input on impacts to special education programs and children, including exploring impacts of cuts to support services which impact children in the regular classroom.

Pilot Intermediate Language Learning Disability Program

In 2013, parents came to SEAC with concerns about the gap in supports for children with language learning disabilities in the intermediate grades. In response, the OCDSB developed a two-year pilot project to test a better approach to support and assist these students. The Intermediate Language Learning Disability (ILLD) Pilot Program has recently been completed and evaluated. SEAC eagerly awaits further information regarding the potential continuation of the program and next steps.

New special education criteria

This spring, the OCDSB released a set of parent guides providing new program descriptions and criteria for each category of special education. These guides formally introduce the concept of tiered interventions into special education placement decisions.

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.



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>