

Section 5: SEAC Meeting Processes

5.1 Administrative Support

Under Regulation 464/97, Section 9 (8) *“The committee shall meet at least 10 times in each school year.”* Typically, school boards hold SEAC meetings each month during the school year from September to June.

Section 10(1) the school board is required to make available the “personnel and facilities” for the “proper functioning of the committee”. SEAC members require a number of supports to effectively conduct business.

For most school boards, SEAC members meet together in one location on a monthly basis, for others, face to face meetings are less frequent, and business is conducted via teleconferences. Some SEACs also rotate locations in order to enable SEAC members to visit different facilities and programs within the school board.

Effective Practices to support SEAC members in remote locations include:

- a. Providing teleconference facilities for some or all of the SEAC members to participate from their homes, or locations distant from the meeting.
- b. Electronic distribution of materials in advance of the meeting.
- c. Allowing SEAC members access to schools or school board facilities equipped with high speed internet, teleconference and/or webcast capacity.
- d. Alternating SEAC Meeting locations within the school board boundaries.
- e. Providing travel expenses to compensate volunteers for costs associated with travelling to meetings.
- f. Promoting car pooling with staff or other SEAC members to

In planning for SEAC Meetings it is also important to support SEAC participation by providing audio-visual equipment; microphones and sound systems, computers, desks or work spaces.

The school board must also provide the additional accommodations that individual SEAC members with a disability may require in order to participate in the meeting. School boards may need to ensure that meetings are held in accessible locations, and that specialized

resources, including large print, electronic or Braille versions of documents, closed captioning or sign language interpreters, are obtained to accommodate SEAC members.

5.2 SEAC Agendas

The Agenda is a key document in driving the activities of SEAC. **PAAC on SEAC recommends that the agenda should be provided to members at least 3 business days in advance of meetings and should be developed collaboratively.**

Effective Practices for the development of SEAC Agenda's include:

- a. Inviting all members of SEAC to identify future agenda topics or to forward agenda items to the Chair at the end of each meeting, or following each SEAC meeting.
- b. Holding a meeting of the Chair and Vice-chair with board administration staff, between meetings, to develop the Agenda.
- c. Establishing a sub-committee or an executive committee, to be responsible for developing the Agenda and planning meetings.
- d. Following the PAAC on SEAC Annual Calendar, or one developed by the SEAC, to be proactive about agenda items and information requirements expected in the course of each school year.

The agenda can also be used to identify the expectations for each agenda item or to make sure important items have sufficient discussion time. For example, in the sample SEAC Agenda in Table 6 columns have been included to indicate whether there is a relevant attachment to the agenda, or whether an item is being received for Information only, for discussion or for resolution or recommendation.

Effective practices to format the agenda and support SEAC roles include:

- a. Establishing a start and end time for each item on the agenda or selected items.
- b. A column on the agenda to indicate whether an item is being presented for “information only”, “discussion” or “decision”.
- c. A column on the agenda to identify who will be responsible or presenting the agenda item.
- d. A column on the agenda to indicate relevant documents that may be attached and related to particular topics.
- e. A “Business Arising” section on the agenda to track the follow up on action items from previous meetings.
- f. Listing “Association Reports” and “Correspondence” as standing agenda items.
- g. A “Future Agenda Items” section on the Agenda, to track topics of interest to SEAC members.

Table 6: A sample SEAC Agenda

SEAC Agenda						
1st Tuesday of the month, 2011						
Meeting: 6:30 to 9:00pm			Location: Education Centre			
Time	Item	Att.	Info.	Disc.	Res.	Responsibility
6:30 p.m.	Call to Order					Chair
6:31 p.m.	Confirmation of Agenda		√			Chair
6:35 p.m.	Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest					Chair
6:40 p.m.	Approval of Minutes from last meeting				√	Chair
6:45 – 7:00 pm	Business Arising from the Minutes	√		√		
Timed Item 7:00 – 7:30	Presentation by the Staff about new program		√			Program Staff
7:30 p.m.	Special Education Update - Program review			√		Special

SEAC Agenda						
1st Tuesday of the month, 2011						
Meeting: 6:30 to 9:00pm				Location: Education Centre		
Time	Item	Att.	Info.	Disc.	Res.	Responsibility
	update - Proposed changes					Education Superintendent or Principal
8:00 p.m.	Special Education Report review update		√			Sub-committee Chair
8:30 p.m.	Board Improvement Plan update		√			Special Education Staff
8:45 p.m.	Association Reports		√			All
8:50 p.m.	Correspondence		√			Chair
8:55 p.m.	Future Agenda Items			√		Chair
8:57 p.m.	Date, time and location of Next Meeting		√			Chair
9:00 p.m.	Adjournment					Chair
Note: Column Abbreviations:						
	Att.	Attachments to the agenda		Disc.	Item for discussion	
	Info.	Item for information only				
	Res.	Item for resolution or recommendation				

5.3 SEAC Motions

Some SEACs make only a few Motions each year related to the Special Education Report and/or the Special Education Budget. Other SEACs make Motions regularly either to make sure important information is shared with Trustees or to request specific information or resources to assist the work of SEAC. (See Appendix 4 for more information on making motions and an example template.) In Table 7 is a sample template for a SEAC Motion, and in Table 8 a sample script for making motions has been provided.

Table 7: Sample Template for a SEAC Motion

XYZ District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee	
Be it Resolved that SEAC recommends to the Board of Trustees that.....	
Moved by:	SEAC Member's Name
Seconded by:	SEAC Member's Name
Date:	

As an accountability mechanism, SEAC members need to know what happens to their motions and what the response was from the Trustees and board administration. This is especially true for the motions related to the Special Education Report and the Special Education Budget which SEAC is required, by regulation, to provide input. These motions are often made in June at the end of the school year, and as SEAC doesn't meet again till September, SEAC members need to be informed about how they were received by the Trustees.

Effective Practices to track motions and the school board or Trustee response include:

- a. Putting an item related to past or forthcoming motions, on the SEAC Agenda identifying who will report on the motion, either verbally or in writing.
- b. Creating an action chart attached to each Agenda to track past motions and prepare for new motions.
- c. Providing SEAC members with a written response to Motions from the Trustees and/or board administration staff

PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook 2010

Who Speaks	Action	Script
SEAC Member 1	Reading the Motion	"I would like to move the motion. Be it resolved that SEAC recommends to the Board of trustees that..."
Chair	Asking SEAC members	"Is there a seconder for this motion?"
SEAC Member 2:	Raising Hand	"I second the motion"
Note: Only after the motion has been made and seconded should the motion be discussed.		
Chair	Addressing members	"Is there any discussion?"
Note: When discussing the motion, members should start their remarks with a statement on whether they are for or against the motion.		
Chair	Members raise their hands, if they want to speak to the motion.	"I have a list of speakers. Please start, SEAC member 5."
SEAC Member 1		"I support the motion for the following reasons...."
Chair		"SEAC member 5"
SEAC Member 5		"I speak against the motion because...."
Chair		"SEAC member 6 do you want to comment on the motion?"
SEAC member 6		"I would like clarification about...."
Chair		"It sounds like there is support to make a change to the motion. SEAC member 2"
SEAC member 2	Reading the amended motion	"I wish to make a friendly amendment to the motion to address these concerns, by adding the following words and changing the motion to read..."
Chair		"Is this change agreeable to the mover, SEAC Member 1?"
SEAC Member 1		"I agree to the change to the motion."
Chair	Addressing the Secretary	"Can we please hear the amended motion?"
SEAC Secretary	Reads the amended motion	"Be it resolved that SEAC recommends to the Board of Trustees....."
Chair	Looking at members. The Chair and Secretary count all of the raised arms	"Is there any further discussion? Seeing none, I will call for a vote on the motion. All those in favour, please raise your hands."
Chair	The Chair and Secretary count all of the raised arms	"All those opposed to the motion, please raise your arms."
Chair	The Chair and Secretary count all of the raised arms	"Are there any abstentions from the vote? Please raise your arm."
When there are more members who support the motion, than voted against the motion, the motion will be passed.		

Chair		"The motion is carried."
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Table 8: Sample Script for Motions at a Meeting

5.4 Quorum

Under parliamentary procedures a committee meeting must have a quorum to be recognized as a valid meeting. In Regulation 464/97 Section 9 (1) the quorum for the SEAC is defined as:

“A majority of the members of a special education advisory committee is a quorum, and a vote of a majority of the members present at a meeting is necessary to bind the committee.”

In practical terms this means that the SEAC meeting can only take place if the number of SEAC voting members is equal to half of all the voting members plus one. For example, if SEAC has 16 members, including local association Members, Trustees, First Nations and Additional Members, 9 members (half of 16 = 8 plus 1) must be present for the meeting to proceed. Alternate members are only considered to be voting members when the local association representative is absent.

SEAC Motions are considered to have been approved or passed by SEAC if the majority of those present approve or support the motion and the attendance at the meeting met the required quorum for the committee. In the previous example, this means a motion can be approved by SEAC with 5 votes in favour from the 9 Members present at the meeting. This demonstrates why it is important for SEAC members, or their Alternates, to attend every meeting

5.5 Minority Reports

Committee parliamentary procedures allow members who do not agree with the majority position on Motions to submit a Minority Report. Minority Reports are usually related to the annual Special Education Report or Special Education Budget. There is a lot of confusion and misunderstanding about Minority Reports, how to write them, how to present and what happens afterwards. **PAAC on SEAC recommends that SEAC training sessions and the school board SEAC Orientation Manual include information about Minority reports.**

Table 9: Sample Minority Report

<p>RE: Motion from the Special Education Advisory Committee of the District School Board dated _____ that said:</p> <p>“Be it Resolved that the Special Education Advisory Committee recommends that.....”</p>							
<p>The following members of SEAC disagree with this motion and have filed a Minority Report to provide a record of their disagreement with the motion:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Name of Representative</td> <td>Name of Provincial Organization</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Name of Representative</td> <td>Name of Provincial Organization</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Name of Representative</td> <td>Name of Provincial Organization</td> </tr> </table>		Name of Representative	Name of Provincial Organization	Name of Representative	Name of Provincial Organization	Name of Representative	Name of Provincial Organization
Name of Representative	Name of Provincial Organization						
Name of Representative	Name of Provincial Organization						
Name of Representative	Name of Provincial Organization						
<p>The above disagree with the motion for the following reasons: (these are just examples)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Range of placements not adequate for exceptional students identified as..... 2. Number of professional staff inadequate to meet needs. Specifically, 3. Unqualified staff being used inappropriately to develop and implement programming which should only be developed by a Professional based on an assessment of needs. For example, 4. Special education budget inadequate to provide adequate numbers of special education teachers or staff for..... <p>In conclusion, we ask the Board of Trustees to consider these issues carefully and to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - do the following..... (not approve the plan, reconsider the budget, etc) 							
<p>Signed by:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Name</td> <td>Signature: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Name</td> <td>Signature: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Name</td> <td>Signature: _____</td> </tr> </table>		Name	Signature: _____	Name	Signature: _____	Name	Signature: _____
Name	Signature: _____						
Name	Signature: _____						
Name	Signature: _____						
Date:	Day Month Year						
<p>Provide Copies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of SEAC • SEAC Members • President or Executive Director of Local and/or Provincial Parent Association 							

Effective practices related to Minority Reports include:

- a. Information about Minority Reports in SEAC training and school board SEAC orientation manual (See Table 9 for sample template for Minority Reports).
- b. A template for Minority Reports in the school board SEAC Orientation Manual.
- c. Development of a school board protocol for submitting Minority Reports and sharing them with Trustees. Protocol should include sharing copies of Minority Report with all SEAC members.
- d. Development of school board process to share with SEAC the outcome of presenting the SEAC Motion and related Minority Report to the Trustees.
- e. Development of a SEAC process to document past Minority Reports for consideration at future meetings and as part of annual planning.
- f. Development by provincial and local parent association of guidelines, regarding the form and development of Minority Reports, to include as part of their SEAC resources and during SEAC orientation and training sessions.

5.6 Chair and Vice Chair Appointment and Roles

Section 9 (3) of Regulation 464/97 deals with the election of Chair and Vice-chair of SEAC. The regulation says:

“The members of the committee shall, at their first meeting, elect one of their members as chair and one of their members as vice-chair.”

SEAC practices related to the Chair and Vice-chair vary across the province and many school boards have policies regarding the process for electing or appointing Chairs and Vice-chairs. The process for electing SEAC Chair and Vice-Chair must be compliant with the regulation and the school board policies and procedures.

PAAC on SEAC recommends that each school board SEAC have a policy in place that describes:

- **The term and qualifications of the Chair and Vice-chair;**
- **The responsibilities of the Chair and Vice-chair;**
- **The process of electing the Chair and Vice-chair;**
- **The process for holding a meeting in the absence of the Chair and Vice-chair.**

Effective Practices related to the roles and responsibilities of the SEAC Chair and Vice-chair include:

- a. Provide all members of SEAC with the opportunity to be considered for election as Chair or Vice-chair.
- b. Assign the Chair and Vice-chair joint responsibility for setting the Agenda and reviewing the Minutes.
- c. Include time keeping during meetings, and tracking future agenda items as responsibilities of the Vice-chair.
- d. Provide information and training to SEAC members on the process of electing the Chair and Vice-Chair, including the process for nominations, and sample motions related to nominations, destroying the ballots, etc.

5.7 Meeting Evaluation

PAAC on SEAC recommends regular evaluation of SEAC meetings. Meeting evaluation does not have to be complicated and can be either formal or informal. Evaluation should, however, be conducted on a regular or annual basis.

Effective Practices to evaluate SEAC meetings include:

- a. Inviting SEAC members to comment at the end of the meeting, or at selected meetings once or twice a year.
- b. Conducting meeting evaluation as a regular Agenda item at each meeting.
- c. Establishing a sub-committee to design and recommend a meeting evaluation process.
- d. Asking members to provide feedback on the meetings to the Chair or Vice-chair.
- e. Working with the school board research department to conduct regular or annual SEAC meeting evaluations.

A simple tool that has been used successfully by a number of SEACs is the Stop, Start and Continue template, shown in Table 10. This form can be copied and completed by each member individually, or can be a facilitated activity for small groups or the whole membership. Another example of a meeting evaluation form can be found in Appendix 4.

Accountability is one of the most important parts of meeting evaluation and follow-up is essential. The SEAC leadership, including the Chair, Vice-chair and school board supervisory staff, need to listen to members and act on suggestions for change. Accountability requires that activities to evaluate meetings are taken seriously and result in improvements to the meeting process.

Table 10: Meeting Evaluation Form – Stop Start and Continue

Meeting Date:	
I would like to see this activity at SEAC	STOP
I would like to see this activity at SEAC	CONTINUE
I would like to see this activity at SEAC	START
Comments or suggestions:	