



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Report No. 23-027

4 April 2023

**Approval of Revisions to Policy P.019.GOV Special Education
Advisory Committee**

**Key Contact: Janice McCoy, Executive Officer, Corporate Services,
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PURPOSE:

1. To seek approval of the proposed revisions to Policy P.019.GOV Special Education Advisory Committee.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

2. Appointing Indigenous representatives to the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) supports the District's commitment to promoting and protecting Indigenous rights, human rights, and equity as well as implementing sound governance structures.

CONTEXT:

3. Ontario Regulation 464/97, *Special Education Advisory Committees*, requires all school boards in Ontario to establish a Special Education Advisory Committee for the board, and sets out the requirements and limitations on the membership of the committee. The members of the SEAC are appointed by the Board for the term of the Board.

The Indigenous Education Council (IEC) made a request that the composition of SEAC be amended to include members who represent the interests of

Indigenous students with special education needs. This change requires revisions to the current policy and Board approval.

4. This report highlights the main themes that emerged from consultations on draft Policy P.019.GOV Special Education Advisory Committee, which was presented for discussion to the Indigenous Education Council (IEC) on 16 February 2023, the SEAC on 1 March 2023, and the Committee of the Whole on 07 March 2023, and shared with the public between 08 March 2023 until 22 March 2023 through the District website and social media accounts. The suggested revisions to the Policy are highlighted in Appendix A.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

5. Special Education Advisory Committee Composition

In accordance with section two of *Ontario Regulation 464/97, Special Education Advisory Committees* and as outlined in sections 4.2 to 4.13 of Board Policy P.019.GOV: Special Education Advisory Committee, the OCDSB SEAC currently consists of:

- a) Three trustees appointed by the Board;
- b) One representative, as well as an alternate, from each of nine (9) local associations that operate within the jurisdiction of the Board, as nominated by the local association and appointed by the Board, as follows:
 - i) Association for Bright Children, Ottawa Region Chapter (ABC)
 - ii) Down Syndrome Association, National Capital Region (DSA)
 - iii) Learning Disabilities Association of Ottawa-Carleton (LDAO-C)
 - iv) Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD/ONE)
 - v) Autism Ontario, Ottawa Chapter
 - vi) Inclusion Action in Ontario (IAO)
 - vii) VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children (VOICE)
 - viii) Easter Seals Ontario
 - ix) Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC)

The regulation and the Board's policy provides for up to a maximum of twelve local associations to be represented on SEAC. A local association is defined in the regulation as "an association or organization of parents that operates locally within the area of jurisdiction of a board and that is affiliated with an association or organization that is not an association or organization of professional educators but that is incorporated and operates throughout Ontario to further the interests and well-being of one or more groups of exceptional children or adults".

- c) One representative, as well as an alternate, nominated by the Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC), and appointed by the Board, pursuant to s. 2(5) of the Regulation, which provides that the board may appoint one or more additional members who are neither representatives of a local association (as defined above) nor members of the board or another committee of the board.
 - d) Three community members to advocate in the interest of all students with special needs, and do not represent the interests of any particular exceptionality, who are also appointed pursuant to s. 2(5) of the Regulation as additional members.
- 6. The Board has the authority under section 2(5) of the Regulation to add additional members to the SEAC. Such members may not be a representative of a local association, as that term is defined in the Regulation, or a member of another committee of the Board.
- 7. The changes required to Policy P.019.GOV to effect this change are shown in the attached draft (Appendix A). More specifically, the voting member composition of SEAC has been amended to reflect the inclusion of up to two members representing Indigenous students with special education needs, and delegates the authority for selecting the Indigenous representatives to IEC, followed by approval of the Board. Input received from the Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils non-voting representative led to an improvement to the language in section 4.5. This change reflects the previous practice of OCASC having both a representative and alternate voting member.

The specific language related to these changes is as follows:

Composition

- 1.1. The Board shall appoint three trustees to the Special Education Advisory Committee.
- 1.2. One representative and alternate **voting** member nominated by each of the following Local Associations shall be appointed by the Board for the duration of the term of the Board:
 - a) Association for Bright Children, Ottawa Region Chapter (ABC);
 - b) Down Syndrome Association, National Capital Region (DSA);
 - c) Learning Disabilities Association of Ottawa-Carleton (LDAO-C);
 - d) Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD/ONE);

- e) Autism Ontario, Ottawa Chapter;
- f) Inclusion Action in Ontario (IAO);
- g) VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children (VOICE);
- h) Easter Seals Ontario; and
- i) Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC).

1.3. The Board shall not appoint more than twelve (12) representatives under section 4.2.

1.4. Where there are more than twelve (12) Local Associations within the area of the jurisdiction of the Board, the Board shall, upon the recommendation of the Selection Committee, select up to twelve (12) Local Associations that shall be represented.

1.5. The following additional *voting* members who are neither representatives of a Local Association nor members of the Board or another committee of the Board *shall be appointed by the Board for the duration of the term of the Board*:

- a) ***One representative and one alternate nominated by the Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC);***
- b) ***Up to three (3) community representatives, upon the recommendation of the SEAC selection committee; and***
- a) ***Up to two (2) members to represent the interests of Indigenous students with special education needs, as selected by the Indigenous Education Council.***

8. Quorum

An additional statement has also been added to section 4.10 to reconcile the impact of vacancies on the quorum calculation. The addition will ensure that the meetings of the SEAC will not be negatively affected by the new policy and its change to the quorum as a result of the additional members identified in section 4.5 c.

9. Next Steps

Should the Board approve the recommendation, staff will work with the IEC on the required changes to Procedure [PR.538.GOV Appointment of Community Representatives and Local Associations to the Special Education Advisory](#)

[Committee](#). It is anticipated that this work will proceed in April and May with the IEC making its recommendations of individuals to the Board by September 2023.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

10. There are no significant resource implications with this report or the proposed changes to the composition of SEAC. Any costs associated with the expansion of the committee and the selection of the two representatives would be minimal and covered through existing budgets.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

11. The proposed changes were shared with the IEC and the SEAC seeking their input and feedback. The draft policy was posted to the District's website to invite feedback from the community. Both the IEC and SEAC were supportive of the revisions.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the revisions to policy P.019.GOV Special Education Advisory Committee, attached as Appendix A to Report 23-027, be approved.

Janice McCoy
Executive Officer,
Corporate Services

Michèle Giroux
Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board

APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Revised Policy P.019.GOV: Special Education Advisory Committee