OVERVIEW

Section 2

SEAC REGULATION 464/97

Systemic Advocacy

To examine existing policies and practices in order that changes can be made to those that are detrimental to vulnerable people or which put barriers in the way of their autonomy and independence**.**

Code of Conduct

All SEAC members will follow the York Region District School Board's (YRDSB) Code of Conduct.

The primary responsibilities of a SEAC member are to:

- be well informed about the work of SEAC, the expectations set out for SEAC by legislation and the school board's Special Education Plan;
- act as a systematic advocate;
- ensure that all exceptional students within the board are served appropriately;
- ensure that the school board fulfills its legal obligations relating to the delivery of special education programs and services and to reporting to the Ministry;
- represent effectively the organization by whom he/she was nominated to the SEAC and the exceptional children served by that association; and
- participate in other school board activities including the delivery of professional development training and systemic advocacy activities.

A SEAC member is not there to:

- focus on the personal situation of his/her exceptional child;
- focus on any one individual child or situation;
- blame the school board for everything; or
- defend the school board against legitimate concerns raised about service delivery.

A SEAC member needs to know:

- All relevant parts of the legislation, including regulations and key policies, relating to the delivery and funding of special education programmes and services to all exceptional students;

- The definition of relevant terms, such as exceptional pupil, special education programme, special education service, IEP, the categories and definitions of all exceptionalities, (not just the one that he or she is representing) and range of placement options available to exceptional students, (not just those available to his or her school Board);
- All relevant information relating to his or her school board's Special Education Report;
- An overview of the school board budget and the details of the board's special education budget;
- All relevant processes for fulfilling the SEAC's advocacy mandate;
- All desirable skills for achieving the SEAC's mandate; and
- Rules of Parliamentary process.

TEAM
TOGETHER
EVERYONE
ACHIEVES
MORE

Productive Team Characteristics
- The team has clear and agreed upon goals
- Team members depend on, and support one another
- The whole team meets together frequently
- Each person on the team has some influence
- Each person on the team has specific areas of responsibilities
- Each person on the team finds the association personally rewarding
- The team has frequent decision making opportunities

Guidelines for Participants
1. Speak up. Don't save comments for the walk out the door.
2. Don't monopolize the time; give everyone a chance to speak.
3. Respect other people's ideas. When disagreeing be positive and constructive.
4. If something is unclear, ask, it may be unclear to others as well.
5. Don't carry on side conversations. Maintain an active interest in the meeting.
6. Ask yourself – "How can I be better prepared for the next meeting?

Communication Tips

1. Ask yourself if your attitudes are getting in the way of communicating effectively.

2. Use concrete, specific words rather than abstractions in describing situations or in making requests.

3. Ask if you are unclear about what has been said.

4. Don't use extremes such as always and never.

5. Study the context, meaning is also conveyed in gestures, expression, and tone of voice.

6. Try and deal with facts, not assumptions to avoid jumping to conclusions.

7. Be aware of any distractions within yourself (feelings, problems) that may interfere with your ability to listen.

8. Plan what you are going to say in order that it will be received, understood and remembered.

9. Before beginning to read any materials for the SEAC meeting, identify what information you are trying to obtain, or what question you are trying to answer.

PROBLEM – SOLVING WORKSHEET

The problem: What happened that should not have happened or what did not happen that should have?

_____

_____

The questions:

Who is involved? _____

What went wrong? _____

Where is it happening? _____

When did things start to go wrong? _____

List possible causes.
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Which of these causes best explains what went wrong?

_____

List possible solutions.
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Decide on a solution. _____

Can the solution be applied with available resources?

_____

How will the solution make things happen the way you want them to happen?

_____

Problem Solving Model

State Problem - P

Identify Real Issue - R

List Choices and/or Options - O

Select Best Choice - B

Plan Action - L

Implement Plan - E

Evaluate - M

Mnemonic Device

Problem statement
Real Issue
Options
Best Choice
List Steps
Execute Plan
Measure your success

Guiding Principles for Building Credibility

- Showing respect for people
- Demonstrating honest and ethical behaviour
- Recognizing that I do not know it all, others have much to offer
- Setting a good example
- Showing a warm and caring attitude
- Collaborating with others
- Being loyal to people
- Celebrating the successes

Tips on Preparing for Meetings: Preparation for SEAC Meetings

The "W" Questions

- What is the purpose of the meeting?
- Why am I going?
- What do I want to accomplish at this meeting?
- Where is the meeting?
- When is the meeting?
- What information should I take with me?
- What issues do I want to see discussed?
- What am I going to report about my association?
- What information do I want to leave with after the meeting?
- What will I do with the information I have gained?

The "How" Questions

- How do I contribute to the SEAC?
- How do I disseminate/share information?
- How do I acquire information?
- How do I use the information?
- How do I encourage others to contribute?
- How do I communicate/listen effectively?
- How do I encourage the board and other SEAC reps to investigate all options?
- How do I acquire feedback?
- How do we initiate a process, which will encourage feedback and follow through?

ASSOCIATION REPORT

NAME OF ASSOCIATION: _____

REPRESENTATIVE: _____

DATE OF MEETING: _____

UPCOMING MEETINGS OR CONFERENCES:

_____

_____

NEW INITIATIVES: _____

OTHER INFORMATION:

_____

_____

PROCEDURES FOR APPOINTING ALTERNATE SEAC REPRESENTATIVES

1. The association must submit the name of an alternate for approval, including information on his or her qualifications for serving as a member of the SEAC.
2. An alternate representative must receive orientation with regard to the SEAC roles and responsibilities and operating norms in conjunction with the voting representatives and must also review the orientation manual.
3. When the association representative attends a SEAC meeting, the alternate representative may also attend as an observer in the public gallery; however, only the SEAC representative at the table may speak on behalf of the association.
4. An alternate representative replacing a SEAC member must so advise the chair in order to have voting privileges.
5. It is the responsibility of the SEAC member and his or her alternate to communicate all discussions, resource materials and decisions taken at SEAC meetings.
6. The alternate representative cannot replace the SEAC members at more than three meetings per year.

SEAC Rep Action Plan

- At the next SEAC meeting, I shall…
  - introduce a motion about; ask a question about, report on…

- At a future SEAC meeting, I shall…

- To improve my performance as a SEAC rep, I shall…
  - participate in more training, go to a conference, network with other SEAC reps, read and follow up on the SEAC Circular more carefully…

ANNUAL EVALUATION

An annual evaluation is submitted to all voting and non-voting SEAC members. Results are analyzed, summarized and considered for next steps for the following year.

STOP – START – CONTINUE

STOP
What is presently being done that should be stopped because it is not helpful or useful?

_____
_____
_____

START
What should be started because it is needed and would be useful or helpful?

_____
_____
_____

CONTINUE
What should be continued because it is helpful, useful or worthwhile?

_____
_____
_____

Example of SEAC Meeting Evaluation Form

XYZ District School Board
Special Education Advisory Committee
Meeting Evaluation Form

The purpose of this form is to obtain feedback from members on the SEAC meeting. This information will assist in seeing how meetings can be improved. Completed forms will be sent to the Research Department for analysis. Do not include your name.

For each of the statements below, please select one response that reflects your view. Use the *not applicable* where necessary.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
The Agenda was structured appropriately					
The Agenda items were timed appropriately					
Meeting time was used effectively					
Sufficient background information on issues was provided					
I had an opportunity to voice my opinions					
Decisions, recommendations and next steps were clear					
Members were respectful of each other					
Members worked together in a constructive way					

What suggestions do you have, if any, for improving future meetings?

_____
_____
_____
_____

EXAMPLES OF MEETING EXPECTATIONS OR NORMS

Establish Expectations for Members	1. Arrive on time. 2. Review agenda before meeting and bring any relevant information. 3. Turn off all laptops, cell phones and pagers, or set to vibrate, for the duration of the meeting. 4. Raise your hand to indicate your request to speak. 5. Listen to others. 6. Be courteous. 7. Do not interrupt other speakers or dominate discussion.
Establish Procedures for the Meeting	1. Determine break times, or agree that members can leave room or get refreshments, as needed. 2. Agree whether members can walk around during meeting. 3. Discourage side meetings or conversations. 4. Identify time-keeper for agenda items. 5. Identify critical items or tasks for the meeting. 6. Agree on the use of a facilitator or rotating facilitator for discussions. 7. Establish time frame and process for discussions (may include allowing a facilitator to have discretion on extending time limits to allow every member an opportunity to speak). 8. Obtain agreement on items that may require voting by members.
During Presentations or Discussions	1. Use a facilitator or ask members to facilitate parts of discussion. 2. Agree to reserve judgment on ideas generated during brainstorm. 3. Stay focused and on time. 4. Discourage rehashing or repetition of positions or statements. 5. Allow for breakout into teams for discussion of components or alternatives. 6. Identify relevant issues, and state all concerns related to issue at the meeting. 7. Table or record in "Parking Lot" issues or items for future discussion.
At End of Meeting	1. End on time or ask for a motion to extend meeting. 2. Review meeting action items, include dates and times. 3. Determine what will be included in meeting minutes.