

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Recommendations - 2023-2024



Huron-Superior Catholic
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Number of Students - 4436 · Active IEPs - 1236 · Elementary - 1001 · Secondary - 235

Exceptional IEPs - 686 · Non-Exceptional IEPs - 550 · Sault Ste. Marie - 510 / 375 · East & North Schools - 176 / 175

Success and Well-Being of our Students

1. Whereas, physical support equipment can support a student's needs to stand up during lessons and satisfy a sensory or rocking need to help to sustain attention; and whereas, self-regulation items help to maintain emotional regulation and acceptable behaviours; **SEAC recommends that necessary equipment be purchased and or available in the Learning Library for students with special needs who are in intermediate and senior grades. Suggestions include alternative seating options and materials pertaining to the child's well-being. SEAC further recommends that Learning Resource Teachers collaborate with classroom teachers and Educational Assistants to determine what is available and to access these resources in the interim of supports.**
2. Whereas, the goal is for students to be in school a full day and not remain on a modified day for an extended period without a plan; and whereas, the purpose of this plan is to help the child's day increase in such a way as to promote success and re-integration; **SEAC recommends that students who are sent home regularly, due to their inability to cope or in any capacity sustain a full day of school, meet at regular intervals (i.e. case conference) with the parent/guardian, school team, Special Education Department, and community partners to develop a formal plan and set attainable goals.**
3. Whereas, every child with a vision impairment faces unique challenges in how they interpret the world; and whereas, much of a child's learning occurs at school, children with vision impairments greatly benefit from the support of a specialized vision itinerant teacher who is able to educate and provide resources to classroom teachers and Educational Assistants. **SEAC recommends that a vision itinerant teacher be assigned within the HSCDSB to support students with vision impairments by offering programming suggestions, resources, and support to teachers and Educational Assistants.**
4. Whereas, inclusion on the bus allows students with special needs to interact with peers and decrease stigma, **SEAC recommends that an adult bus monitor, who has received training on special needs, self-regulation, and bus safety be placed on school buses where there is a high incidence of bus reports whereby students with special needs are removed from the bus. Alternative transportation via cab should be used minimally.**

Equitable Stewardship of our Resources

1. Whereas, the Ministry of Education's Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF) for the 2023-2024 school year was released in April; **SEAC recommends that the Superintendents of Special Education and Finance issue a status report to SEAC in September with regards to the allocations given to the HSCDSB for the projects and programs it intends to pursue.**
2. Whereas, the regular review of SEAC recommendations informs progress, **SEAC recommends the Superintendent of Special Education continue to review this report with SEAC members biannually.**

Journey Together in Faith and Learning

Nurturing of our Catholic Faith

1. Whereas, “Journeying Together in Faith and Learning” is central to the purpose and mission of the HSCDSB; and, whereas, religious education and faith experiences foster inclusivity for all members of a school community; **SEAC recommends that the Board increase funding allocations toward all activities and resources which promote the “Nurturing of Our Catholic Faith”, including funding the Religious Education and Family Life Consultant to a Full-Time Equivalent position.**
2. Whereas, school board policies define guiding principles and set expectations for procedures, roles and responsibilities within a community of schools; **SEAC recommends that the HSCDSB develop a Religious Education and Faith Formation Curriculum Policy with particular consideration given to the accommodations that will enable students with special education needs to grow in their faith.**
3. Whereas, no child should be excluded from any religious or liturgical events, **SEAC recommends that all identified barriers that prevent children from attending or traveling to a school or off-site liturgical celebrations be removed, should the need arise then the Religious Education Family Life Consultant (REFL Consultant) will bring Catholic faith to these children.**

Engagement with Employees and Partners

1. Whereas, there is a significant waitlist for community mental health supports for children; and whereas, it is imperative to normalize and destigmatize counselling and mental health support, **SEAC recommends that families be made explicitly aware of mental health supports provided in schools. Some suggestions for the distribution of this information include emails, a photo wall, parent teacher night, welcome to kindergarten, and online communication tools. It is further recommended by SEAC that each school develop and provide a printed newsletter to each family, in September of each year, outlining all supports available.**
2. Whereas, visual noise can be anxiety provoking, increase disruptive behaviour, and reduce the ability to self-regulate; and in recognizing that the learning environment is the third teacher, **SEAC recommends professional development for all staff regarding purposeful classroom organization, design, and décor with consideration for learners.**
3. Whereas, the HSCDSB SEAC has several new members; and, whereas, “district school boards and school authorities must provide relevant in-service training sessions for all members during regular SEAC meetings or in an alternative forum on an ongoing basis”, **SEAC recommends that appropriate training be completed for its members by the end of the calendar year 2023-2024.**
4. Whereas, SEAC is committed to increasing its accessibility and promoting its mandate to the families, students and staff it serves; **SEAC recommends that representatives of this Committee be invited to Learning Resource Teacher networks, professional development opportunities; and relevant Board activities.**