



# SEAC SOUNDBYTES

*Raising awareness of the Special Education process at HCDSB*

*January 2017*

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## SEAC from a Different Lens!

Over the past year, SEAC has provided important "Soundbytes" on Special Education within HCDSB. The importance of SEAC is our ability to assist the Board in understanding the special needs of exceptional children and youth, and to advise the Board on any matter affecting the establishment and development of special education programs and services. Essentially, it is our primary responsibility to advise on the Special Education Budget and the Special Education Plan every school year. Now it is time to take a closer look at what takes place at the SEAC meeting.

The Special Education Advisory Committee, comprised of school board staff and trustees and representatives of local associations is the "**BRIDGE**" between those who make decisions about special education services/programs and the exceptional children who receive these programs and services. The parents representing local associations provide a focused, big picture lens on complex issues related to students with special needs and we stand behind several board-wide programs such as "Best Buddies", "EMPOWER", "Special Needs Strategy", "Accessibility related to in-school and playground development", "Mental Well-being", "Bullying Awareness" and the "Spirit of Inclusion Awards". Through a reciprocal and collaborative relationship based on mutual respect, SEAC does not advocate on behalf of individual students or families, but rather advises on matters of significant importance for all children who may need individualized and/or specialized programs for learning.

One of the highlights to the SEAC year is the selection of the Spirit of Inclusion recipients in March. The Spirit of Inclusion Award is a celebration of students across the Board who demonstrate exemplary inclusive behaviour within their school communities. It is an honour for a SEAC member to take part in the Board-wide selection of an elementary and secondary student and then present these students with an award at both a SEAC meeting and then again at the system wide annual Student Awards of Excellence Ceremony in April. Be sure to check your school newsletter in the Spring to find out who is the winner at your school.

SEAC meetings are held monthly (usually the last Monday of each month at 7pm) at the Board office throughout the school year and meetings are open to the public. SEAC meeting dates and times can be found on the Board Event Calendar at [www.hcdsb.org](http://www.hcdsb.org).

We would love to see you there.