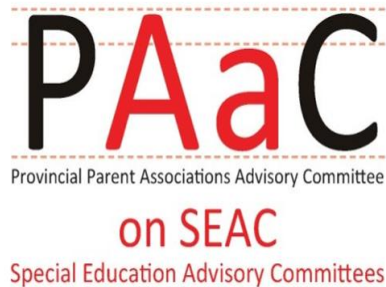


PAAC on SEAC

SEAC Resource Guide on Special Education Funding 2017



Members: Association for Bright Children • Association Francophone de Parents d'Enfants Dyslexiques ou ayant tout autre trouble d'apprentissage • Community Living Ontario • Down Syndrome Association of Ontario • Easter Seals Ontario • Epilepsy Ontario • Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Ontario Network of Expertise • Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community • Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario • Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders • Ontario Brain Injury Association • Parents for Children's Mental Health • Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada • VIEWS Supports and Advocates for Children who are Blind or or Have Low Vision • VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children

Affiliate Members: Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy • Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association of Ontario

PAAC on SEAC SEAC Resource Guide on Special Education Funding 2017

PAAC on SEAC members have developed this resource for SEAC members to help them understand how special education is funded and the role of SEAC in the budget process. This resource has been prepared in April 2017 and includes links to some of the 2017-18 Ministry of Education documents on funding. A few links are to the 2016-17 documents where the 2017-18 document is not yet available. Other documents for 2017-18 should be available soon and the updated links will be added to the SEAC Resource Guide on the PAAC on SEAC website, at www.paac-seac.ca

The Ministry of Education usually adds documents on the specific components of the Special Education Grant, including Special Equipment Amount and Special Incidence Portion, and all of these documents can be found on the Ministry of Education website at:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/index.html>

Every school board in the province is unique and will have their own budget format and process. This means that SEAC members will need to ask questions and seek clarification about the annual special education budget. In reviewing the proposed budget it is important to understand trends in special education revenues and expenditures by looking at past budgets, and financial statements.

SEAC members should also be familiar with the students who are receiving special education programs and services, including the:

- Number of students identified as exceptional through the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)
- Number of students, not identified as exceptional, who have an Individual Education Plan
- Number of students receiving special education programs and services who are not identified as exceptional, and who do not have an IIEP.

SEAC members should also be aware of the special education model of services and how students with special education needs are supported. Finally, SEAC members should be aware of changing needs and potential new areas of expenditures.

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Key responsibilities of SEAC include:

- to participate in the board's annual budget process as that process relates to special education, and
- to have the opportunity to review the financial statements of the board, as those statements relate to special education. (*Regulation 464/97 Section 12, 2 and 3*)

Some members of SEAC find this challenging. As a SEAC member there are a number of things you need to know about how special education is funded and the financial statements of your board.

→ *To help you in your role, this document includes suggestions to assist SEAC in italics.*

Did you know – Special Education Grant

- Money from the Special Education Grant is supposed to be spent only on “special education programs and services”
- “Students with special education needs” or “students receiving special education programs and services” are not just those who have been identified as “exceptional” at Identification Placement Review Committees, or who have Individual Education Plans.
 - *SEAC should ask whether special ed funding is being spent on other students in their board, and why*
 - *SEAC should ask what “special education programs and services” other students receive, which are being paid for out of the special education grant.*
 - *SEAC may want to ask why these students don't have IEPs.*
- All students are funded through the Foundation Grant and other special purpose grants. The Special Education Grant is intended to support the incremental additional costs of special education programs and services.
- This means the board special education expenditures will exceed the revenue it receives from the Special Education Grant. That is what is supposed to happen, and does not mean that special education is “overspent”.
- Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, school boards have a duty to accommodate – to find the money necessary for students with disabilities, unless they can prove undue hardship.

Did you know – Budget Process

- Each school board has a different process for the development of budgets, often including the establishment of a budget committee or ad hoc group.
 - *SEAC members may participate in Budget Committee or working groups*
- Under Regulation 464/97, SEAC members are to have the opportunity to participate in the special education budget planning process.

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- *SEAC members should receive orientation and training regarding financial statements, the Special Education Grant, revenues and expenditures.*
- *The board Finance Department can provide a review of the previous year's financial statements and budget to SEAC typically 3-4 months after end of fiscal year (See SEAC Calendar for recommended timing at: <http://www.paac-seac.ca/annual-calendar/>)*
- *SEAC agendas should include regular updates on Financial Statements and the budget process.*
- *Financial information should be presented to SEAC members in easy to understand language with visuals and graphics.*
- Boards often start the budget process during the winter, and determine “spending” before they find out in the spring how much “income” they will receive from the Province.
 - *SEACs cannot conclude that there will not be enough money or that services must be cut, until they know how much income the board will receive from provincial grants*
- The media sometimes reports about anticipated deficits in special education. These premature announcements can make families very nervous, fearful that accommodations, programs and services their children require will not be provided, and this often happens at the very time IPRCs are determining next year's placements.
 - *SEAC member associations can help dispel unfounded rumours by sharing accurate information*
- It is not until after the provincial budget is set each year - around the end of March or early in April - that the Ministry of Education determines how education funding will be distributed among school boards. Then, the Ministry posts a number of documents about funding and guidelines at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/funding.html>
 - *SEAC members should check the Education Funding section of the Ministry website on a regular basis.*
 - *In 2016-17 the Ministry shared a useful resource, A Guide to Special Education funding that is very helpful at: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/1617/2016_spec_ed_guide_en.pdf*
 - *It is helpful when the school board shares Ministry of Education resource materials regarding special education funding, including Power Points and Webinars, with SEAC members.*
- Funding data for every school board in Ontario is posted by the Ministry. (The 2017-18 data is at http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/1718/2017_18_gsn_school_board_projections_en.pdf) In this document you will find your board's total operating grant amounts in each of the education funding “envelopes”. This shows projected funding for the coming school year, the revised estimate for the current school year, and actual

amounts granted over each of the previous 13 years. It also shows how board enrolment may have changed over that time.

- *SEAC should review the board's Special Education Grant amounts each year when Ministry of Education releases the grant regulations.*
- *SEAC should verify those Ministry amounts with their board*
- *SEAC can divide the total Special Education Grant amount by the total board population to arrive at the board's per pupil income for special education*
- *SEAC should consider how that changes, from year to year.*

Did You Know – Impact of Changing High Needs Amount to Differentiated Special Education Needs Amount

- In 2014, the Ministry began to phase out the High Needs Amount – not all at once, but by 25% a year over 4 years. However, school boards are NOT losing 25% a year. The Ministry is gradually phasing in a new formula in place of the old.
- During the change, the Ministry will allocate the same amount of provincial money to school boards in new ways. That means some boards will get more than they used to, while others get less.
- The new formula is now called the “Differentiated Special Education Needs Amount” (DSENA). The Ministry says it will be a fairer way to compensate boards, according to their proportion of students with significant needs. They created several ways to determine “need” – without documenting individual students, and using a complex formula that uses multiple factors
 - *More information about the Special Education Grant components can be found in the last section of this resource guide*

Did you know – SEAC Role in Budget Review Process

- The special education department will be informing the budget process by sharing with the budget committee anticipated new or changing student needs that may impact the expenditures for special education.
 - *SEAC should be asking in advance of the budget process for the departments' anticipated needs for the following year*
 - *SEACs can request the opportunity to identify special education issues, or priorities for the following school year, to share with the budget committee.*
- When the draft special education budget is shared with SEAC the following items should be clearly identified:
 - Revenues for special education from the Foundation Grant, Special Education Grant and other grants
 - Changes to the grant amounts from previous years
 - Expenditures by category, including staffing projections
 - Links between the expenditure item and funding source

- *SEAC members should carefully analyze special education budget information, program staffing and statistical information about students with special education needs.*
- The budget should clearly show the difference between anticipated revenues and expenditures.
 - *When there is a deficit projected, SEAC should ask how it will be covered*
 - *If programs or services are to be reduced to balance the budget or reduce the deficit, SEAC should ask for details about the changes and the implications for students*
 - *If SEAC members have concerns about the ability of the school board to meet the needs of students they can make a “recommendation” to the school board*
 - *SEAC has the “Right to be Heard” by the Trustees and can request to make a presentation as part of public consultation on the school board budget.*

Did you know – Special Education Grant Components

- The special education "envelope" itself is composed of many components. Those parts are not shown on the Ministry board-by-board site
 - *SEAC should ask the board how much money they received from the Ministry, for each of those special education grant components.*
- Almost all of those special education funding component grants are based on per pupil amounts multiplied by total number of students. (Only a few components depend on how many students have been identified as exceptional, or the number who have Individual Education Plans (IEPs), or any other information about the students who receive special education programs and services.)
- The key components of the special Education Grant are:
 - A. Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA)
 - B. Differentiated Special Education Needs amount (DSENA)
 - C. Special Equipment Amount (SEA)
 - D. Special Incidence Portion (SIP)
 - E. Facilities Amount
 - F. Behavioural Expertize amount

A. The **Special Education Per Pupil Amount** accounts for more than 50% of the total special education grant and is calculated using different rates for primary, junior and secondary students. The highest rate is for the youngest students recognizing the need for early identification and intervention. (For more information see the Technical Paper 2017-18, page 38-44 at:

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/1718/2017_18_technical_paper_en.pdf

B. **Differentiated Special Education Needs Amount** (DSENA) has three components that use multiple factors to measure the boards level of students who have significant

needs. This grant replaces the former High Needs Amount and has been phased in over 4 years, with full implementation in 2018-19. The three components of DSENA are:

1. **Special Education Statistical Prediction Model (SESPM)** uses a number of socio-economic factors for each board (as measured for their area in Canada's 2006 census) which seem to make their students more likely to need special education programs and services (For more details on the factors used to calculate the SESPМ see the Ministry of Education Memo Special Education Funding in 2016-17 at:
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/1617/2016sb07_en.pdf
2. **Measures of Variability (MOV)** is a complex statistic arrived at for each board that depends on 13 factors, including measures such as
 - a) how many students receive special education programs and services;
 - b) student achievement as measured by Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO)
 - c) how many students taking part in EQAO testing requiring three or more accommodations
 - d) how many students have not earned 16 credits by the end of Grade 10
 - e) how many students are taking Locally Developed and "K" course at high school
 - f) an adjustment for rural and remote boards
 - g) an adjustment for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students
3. **Base Amount for Collaboration and Integration** is set each year. (\$450,000 in 2016-17) The same amount goes to each board, regardless of size, "to explore collaborative and integrated approaches to serving students with special education needs".

C. Another component of special education funding is the **Special Equipment Amount (SEA)** – and it has 2 parts:

1. Boards may apply for **SEA Claims-Based funding** to pay for the non-computer based equipment individual students need, after boards pay the first \$800. (This is one of the few components of funding that does depend on information about the students who use it.)
2. The **SEA Per Pupil Amount** is to be spent to make specialized computer technology available to individual students, as well as to pay for related training, insurance and technician services for all SEA-funded equipment. (How much boards receive depends on the total enrolment of the board, not on those students' individual assessments or characteristics.)
 - *SEACs should find out SEA funding amounts (and how that changes, year-to-year) and how their board allocates the supports purchased by SEA funding.*
 - *2016-17 SEA information is at*
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/1617/2016_17_sea_guidelines_en.pdf

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- D. School boards may apply for **Special Incidence Portion** (SIP) funding towards the costs of extra staff support relating to the extraordinary health and safety issues of specific students. (This is another component of funding that depends on information about the students who use it.) It currently provides up to \$27,000 per student a year, for students who require more than two full-time equivalent board-paid staff at all times. SIP does not cover the full cost of such staffing. As with all other special education expenses, funding from the other “envelopes” should pay for the remainder of these staff costs.
- 2016-17 information about SIP is found at
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/1617/2016_17_sip_guidelines_en.pdf
- E. The Ministry of Education also provides the **Facilities Amount** grant for Care and/or Treatment, Custody and Correctional (CTCC) Facilities. Known as “Section 23” programs the grant supports educational programs in these facilities. For more information check the Ministry of Education, Financial Analysis and Accountability Branch website, Guidelines for Care and/or Treatment, Custody and Correctional (CTCC) Facilities at: https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Section_23/17-18/CTCC%20Guidelines%20%20-%20feb-9-2017_TAGGED.pdf
- F. The Behavioural Expertise amount (BEA) provides funding for school boards to hire board level Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) expertise professionals. The use of ABA instructional approaches has proven to be effective for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other students with special education needs. ABA expertise professional will support school staff by providing and coordinating ABA coaching, training and resource development, as well as facilitating collaboration with community service providers for students transitioning from Intensive Behaviour Intervention (IBI) services.

PAAC on SEAC Resources:

For more information about Special Education Budget and Financial Statements, please see **Section 3.6** of the **PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook for SEAC Members, 2016**
<http://www.paac-seac.ca/home/paac-on-seac-effective-practices-handbook-for-seac-members/section-3-seac-roles-and-responsibilities/3-6-special-education-budget-and-financial-statements/>

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