**Standard 1: The Board’s Consultation Process**

The Halton District School Board will review and update the Special Education Plan on an annual basis. It is our belief that consultation with a variety of stakeholders is necessary to receive rich input that is useful to improve programs and services for students and to update the plan as needed. Consultation occurs in a variety of ways throughout the school board.

**Ongoing and Informal Feedback from Parents/Guardians and Staff**

Staff members have regular and ongoing communication with parents/guardians, system staff, and community agencies. For example, in the course of problem-solving with parents/guardians up to and including the identification, placement and review process, input is received on a wide range of matters including:

* strategies and interventions used to assist students;
* programming provided for students;
* the range of placements available within the Halton District School Board;
* staff allocations and need for further staff training;
* processes, including communications with parents/guardians.

As a school board committed to continuous improvement, input received through ongoing, as well as more formalized processes, gets factored into decisions by the Halton District School Board on the provision of programs, services and resources.

While formalized and mandated input processes are important and useful, a good idea, whether it comes from one person in an informal conversation or through a more formal mechanism, will be considered. Staff of the Halton District School Board are constantly attentive to suggestions that can improve the manner in which we serve student needs. New ideas are reviewed and evaluated by staff based on a number of factors including benefit to students, ease of implementation and cost.

**Community Consultation**

Each year school board staff and SEAC provide opportunities for community input and feedback through community consultation sessions and/or Special Education Programs and Services Information Evenings where parents/guardians and community members are invited to provide input and feedback on special education programs and services in Halton. These sessions are advertised to parents/guardians through school board newsletters and on the board website. An on-line survey has also been used to provide an additional opportunity for receiving feedback from parents/guardians. This input is considered carefully by both staff and SEAC when discussing changes to the Special Education Plan.

The board’s Special Education Plan is posted on the board’s website along with a number of other useful documents. Contact information is available should members of the public have questions or comments on the plan or other issues related to the provision of programs and services for students in the Halton District School Board.

**Public Consultation with the Assistance of the Board’s SEAC**

SEAC is currently comprised of representatives of community associations, the Board of Trustees and ‘members at large’. Every member of SEAC assumes responsibility for speaking with members of the public, either through formal association meetings, or through informal conversations with parents/guardians. Such comments are reflected in the feedback provided through monthly SEAC meetings.

Associations have mechanisms for discussing issues/concerns/successes of our current Special Education Plan. Every monthly agenda includes a section for “Association Reports”, at which time members may introduce matters of interest or concern. Key initiatives of the associations are often shared through this mechanism.

SEAC meetings are open to members of the public. SEAC meeting processes allow for members of the public to make a delegation to SEAC. If members of the public would like to delegate SEAC, they should contact the chair of SEAC. Delegations may be given up to 10 minutes for presentations as determined by the chair. SEAC meeting processes also allow for members of the public to ask questions. Depending on the nature of the questions, answers may be received during the meeting or at the next meeting.

**SEAC Involvement in the Review Process**

Each year SEAC reviews the Special Education Plan and makes recommendations about improving special education resources, programs and services. Suggested amendments to the plan are discussed thoroughly and collated. The plan is modified by staff and brought to SEAC. SEAC votes to support or not support the amended plan each year.

**Majority or Minority Reports, Board Response**

Associations have an opportunity each year to submit a Majority or Minority Report to the Chair and Trustees of the Board concerning the board’s Special Education Plan. The Board issues a response to this report and both are attached as appendices to the plan.

**Means of Communication**

The Halton District School Board communicates with parents, board employees and the community in the following ways:

**i) The Working Together Parent/Guardian Guide**

Halton’s parent/guardian guide, entitled “[Working Together](#WorkingTogeher)”, includes information regarding the IPRC process, exceptionality codes, placement options, appeal processes, and access to provincial and demonstration schools. Schools are required to provide this document prior to SRT, when registering a student with special needs or upon parent/guardian request.

**ii) Board Website**

The Halton District School Board and SEAC are continuously looking for ways to improve the special education and SEAC pages of the board website in order to help parents/guardians find information about special education programs and services more easily. In addition to SEAC member [contact information](https://www.hdsb.ca/learning-and-resources/Pages/Special%20Education%20Programs%20and%20Placements/SEAC-Members.aspx), [agendas and minutes](https://www.hdsb.ca/learning-and-resources/Pages/Special%20Education%20Programs%20and%20Placements/SEAC-Agenda-and-Minutes.aspx), SEAC has added to its page, a link to questions asked during meetings and their answers.