



# AGENDA – SEAC MEETING

## SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 20, 2021 – 5:30 PM

Limestone Education Centre

220 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston, ON

Virtual Meeting Link: [https://bit.ly/SEACJan20\\_2021](https://bit.ly/SEACJan20_2021)

Acknowledgement of Territory: “The Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee. We acknowledge their enduring presence on this land, as well as the presence of Métis, Inuit and other First Nations from across Turtle Island. We honour their cultures and celebrate their commitment to this land.”

1. **WELCOME**
2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
3. **DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**
4. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**
5. **EDUCATIONAL SERVICES UPDATE**
  - 5.1 **Supporting Students with Special Education Needs During Remote Learning** - Principal Darlene Scarlett, Vice Principal Karen Leggett, Superintendent Alison McDonnell
6. **CORRESPONDENCE**
7. **ASSOCIATION UPDATES**

Limestone District School Board

Limestone District School Board is situated on traditional territories of the Anishinaabe & Haudenosaunee.

SEE YOURSELF IN LIMESTONE

- 8. OTHER BUSINESS – Administrative Report: Superintendent’s Report (Page 3)**
  - 8.1 PAAC on SEAC Survey of SEAC Members - Superintendent Alison McDonnell (Pages 4-68)**
  - 8.2 New Educational Services Positions to Support the Virtual School - Mental Health Lead Laura Conboy and Educational Services and Safe Schools Liaison Lynne Rousseau**
  - 8.3 2021-2024 Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy - SEAC Consultation - Mental Health Lead Laura Conboy and Data Research Specialist Ellyn Clost Lambert (Page 69)**
- 9. NEXT MEETING DATE**  
Wednesday, February 17, 2021
- 10. ADJOURNMENT**



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## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

January 20, 2021

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#### **1. PAAC on SEAC Survey of SEAC Members**

The results of the PAAC on SEAC Survey of SEAC members are included in the agenda package (Letter to the SEAC Chair, Executive Summary and Action Items and Results of the PAAC on SEAC Survey). The survey was open in the fall of 2019 to winter 2020 and sent to English language school boards across Ontario. Limestone District School Board participated in the survey as part of a SEAC meeting. The results of this survey have been analyzed and compared to results of PAAC on SEAC surveys in 2009 and 2014 with comparisons outlined in the full report, and action items identified in the Executive Summary. All information can also be found at the PAAC on SEAC Website at [www.paac-seac.ca](http://www.paac-seac.ca).

#### **2. New Educational Services Positions to Support the Virtual School**

Two additional supports have been added to the elementary and secondary virtual schools as of January 2021 to support increased student need:

- 1.0 FTE Student Support Counsellor (elementary)
- 1.0 FTE Social Worker (Grade 6-12)

These positions are Ministry funded until the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

#### **3. 2021-2024 Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy-SEAC Consultation (attached) - Mental Health Lead Laura Conboy and Data Research Specialist Ellyn Clost-Lambert**

School boards are required to develop and review a board wide Mental Health Strategy. Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, LDSB will be consulting with a variety of internal and external stakeholders as part of this process. The data that is collected will be used to revise the current LDSB Mental Health Strategy. The updated LDSB Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy (MHSUS) will promote mental health, reduce stigma, and clarify pathways to both Board and community-based supports for students. SEAC members will be involved in a consultation at the January 2021 SEAC meeting. More information is included in the agenda package.

**Prepared by:** Alison McDonnell, Superintendent of Education, Learning for All



Attention: Chair of SEAC

January 8, 2021

Dear SEAC Chair,

The Provincial Parent Association Advisory Committee on Special Education Advisory Committees (PAAC on SEAC) is writing to let you know that the results from the 2020 SEAC Survey have been tabulated, and compared to survey results from 2014 and 2009. They are available on the PAAC on SEAC Website at [www.paac-seac.ca](http://www.paac-seac.ca). PAAC on SEAC was established in 1983 and is the only group in Ontario that brings together provincial parent associations to communicate and co-operate on issues pertaining to SEACs.

PAAC on SEAC was very pleased to get responses to the SEAC Survey from 178 SEAC members representing 30 different school boards. Attached to this letter and on the PAAC on SEAC website you can find:

- Executive Summary of the PAAC on SEAC 2020 Survey, outlining key issues:
  - SEAC Meaningful Participation
  - SEAC Engagement with Community
  - SEAC Recruitment, Orientation and Training
  - PAAC on SEAC Awareness
- Results of the PAAC on SEAC survey, broken down by each question

As part of the survey analysis PAAC on SEAC has identified a set of Action Items for SEACs, the Ministry of Education and PAAC on SEAC, and these are outlined in the Executive Summary.

PAAC on SEAC would also like to share with you two resources that are available on the PAAC on SEAC website:

- PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook for SEAC Members
- PAAC on SEAC Annual Calendar

We encourage you to use these resources for orientation, training and planning for SEAC meetings. The Effective Practices Handbook content is framed around Regulation 464/97 which defines the SEAC Membership, Roles and Responsibilities. The Handbook includes examples

of effective practices from SEACs around the province. It is a great tool to help SEAC members understand their role and enhance effectiveness of SEAC. The Annual Calendar highlights key dates in the school year and information and activities that SEAC should consider each month.

We thank you for sharing this information with your SEAC members and encourage you to visit our PAAC on SEAC website for more information.

Sincerely,

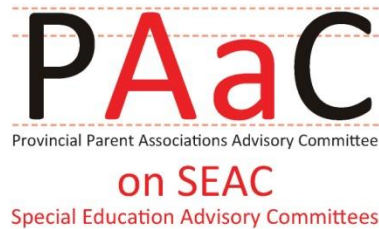
Diane Wagner, Chair

on behalf of the member associations of PAAC on SEAC

**Provincial Parent Association Advisory Committee on Special Education Advisory Committees (PAAC on SEAC)**

**Members:** • Association for Bright Children • Community Living Ontario • Down Syndrome Association of Ontario • Easter Seals Ontario • Epilepsy Ontario • Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Ontario Network of Expertise • Hydrocephalus Canada • Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community • Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario • Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders • VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children

**Affiliate members:** • Association Francophone de Parents d'Enfants Dyslexiques ou ayant tout autre trouble d'apprentissage • Ontario Brain Injury Association • Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy • Parents for Children's Mental Health • Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada • VIEWS for the Visually Impaired



## **PAAC on SEAC 2020 Survey of SEAC Members**

### **Executive Summary and Action Items**

The Provincial Parent Association Advisory Committee on Special Education Advisory Committees (PAAC on SEAC) is the only group in Ontario that brings together provincial parent associations to communicate and co-operate on matters pertaining to Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs) and special education. In order to promote effective practices in SEACs across Ontario, PAAC on SEAC has conducted three surveys distributed to SEAC members. In 2009 and 2014 surveys were sent to all English and French language school boards in Ontario, with the help of funding from a Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant. Without this funding, PAAC on SEAC was still able to distribute a new version of the survey, with comparable questions, to all English language school boards in the Fall/Winter of 2019/2020, to find out what has changed and whether there are new issues or challenges.

PAAC on SEAC extends thanks to all the survey participants and in particular, we are grateful for the many comments which have permitted us to discern trends in terms of where our SEACs function well and where there is need for improvement. There were 178 participants, the same number as in 2014. At least 30 school boards and 18 different local associations or community agencies were represented, although the numbers may not be complete since all of these questions were optional.

SEAC members continue to be engaged in their SEAC and for the most part feel their contributions are valued. Over 90% said that their SEAC encourages input and discussion from members on all presentations and that members of SEAC talk to each other and discuss different points of view respectfully (always or most of the time). However, there were other areas where concerns raised in the past surveys continue, and some areas where results have shown a decline when compared to previous surveys.

Based on the 2020 survey results and comments from participants, we have identified some common themes and areas of opportunity for improvement. At the end of this summary, you will find our action items for SEACs, Ministry of Education, and PAAC on SEAC.

## **SEAC Meaningful Participation**

An area of interest in the 2020 results involves SEACs participation in annual board procedures especially in the areas of key responsibilities, such as the Special Education Plan and Budget. Effective practices of SEACs to promote authentic engagement and suggestions for meeting structure and content include the use of an annual calendar and the sharing of information for discussion. Many of the results and comments reflect these practices; however there is a marked decline in several areas from the results of the 2014 survey.

Several questions cover information that is annually shared with SEACs and responses to these questions identify some areas for improvement. Some relevant comments include:

*"We keep a running list of future topics for discussion or presentation that arise from current topics. We try to work with staff about proactively ensuring they are actually scheduled at a follow-up meeting."*

*"I was not aware of an annual plan for topics to be covered"*

*"Information is brought to SEAC by Special Education Dept. regularly; additional details are provided when committee members want further info."*

*"We have budget specific presentations at 1-3 SEAC meetings between May and June. We always schedule 2 May meetings to allow ample opportunity for this, We usually get a budget update at one other meeting, at least, mid-year."*

*"Again we are asked to approve what has already been submitted or approved by the Board."*

In considering these results, PAAC on SEAC continues to share many effective practices for promoting authentic engagement, including sharing information in advance for meetings and establishing an annual calendar which allows the committee to discuss trends and accomplishments as well as identifying areas for improvement.

The [PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook for SEAC Members](#) (PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook) identifies many effective practices including that SEAC members have input to the agendas and that agendas are circulated at least 5 days in advance of the meeting so that members are prepared for discussions.

Finally it is apparent that two-way communication with the Board (of Trustees) and SEACs is important; and feedback from the Board on minutes and responses to motions and minority reports is necessary to the ongoing work of SEAC.

## **SEAC Engagement with Community**

Respondents point to inconsistencies in information available for the public about SEAC meetings, membership and roles. 74% of respondents say information is always available on board websites which is consistent to 2014 results, however only 40% indicate that their board has a SEAC brochure, which is a significant decrease from 2014.

Respondents indicate that SEACs are able to recruit & retain membership with 75% indicating always/usually, however there is a discrepancy in respondents between large boards where there is competition for vacancies, and smaller boards who have issues on recruitment.

While retention of SEAC members ranks about middle on effectiveness scale, providing information about SEAC available to parents was one of the least effective aspects of SEAC according to respondents.

Several questions cover what information is available to the public about SEAC and how SEACs engage with the community for their membership. Some relevant comments include:

*“The brochure is available on the website, but special education items need to be searched. If you don't know what you're looking for, it's challenging.”*

*“There are some changes from time to time but this SEAC has maintained a core group of association members/agencies who work closely with the system.”*

*“It has been difficult to recruit new members.”*

*“Not a lot of local associations, way too many community partners (paid employees - not parents)”*

*“It would be nice to see meeting minutes online and I am not exactly sure where they post to meeting schedule (assume the main board events feed).”*

PAAC on SEAC continues to recommend SEACs use the *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook* for information on public access and consultation, membership nomination and recruitment ideas and other areas on raising SEAC awareness in the school communities. Effective practices include making sure Board websites contain all pertinent current information on SEAC including meeting dates and times, meeting minutes, and information for the public about becoming a SEAC member. This information could then be regularly shared with school communities, and the broader public through board communication avenues including websites, social media feeds, and targeted messaging. Member recruitment should happen at regular intervals with direct messaging to local associations asking for nominations of qualified individuals.

### **SEAC Recruitment, Orientation and Training**

From the 2020 survey results almost 90% of respondents reported being very familiar (32.96%) or somewhat familiar (59.66%) with [Education Act Ontario Regulation 464/97 Special Education Advisory Committees](#) (Regulation 464/97). This is the key regulation that defines the membership, roles and responsibilities of SEAC and the result is encouraging.



The main place for finding information about SEAC, their roles and responsibilities is school board websites, although several respondents reported that SEAC information was hard to find on the board website.

*“Board website is difficult to navigate. Information is hard to find.”*

Almost 78% of respondents responded that their SEAC was able to recruit new members “usually or always”, several respondents noted it is a challenge to recruit local association members.

*“(SEAC) numbers are still low considering the vast geography that the school board covers. Not familiar with a robust recruitment campaign.”*

PAAC on SEAC members have also heard of many SEACs that do not have the full complement of 12 local association members, especially in rural and remote communities.

The responses to the questions about PAAC on SEAC resources including the PAAC on SEAC website, the *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook*, and the PAAC on SEAC annual planning calendar indicate many of the respondents were unaware of these resources. All of these resources were developed to help SEAC members understand their roles and responsibilities. The *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook for SEAC Members* is especially useful for SEAC orientation and training.

Sample comments include:

*“I remember we had a PAAC on SEAC presentation and it was an eye opener.”*

*“It is circulated electronically so all members are aware of it. If new members have questions they are encouraged to ask individually or as part of the regular meetings.”*

SEAC members reported that orientation and ongoing training would assist in understanding and participating confidently in meetings, initiating discussions about emerging or ongoing issues and voting on motions. They seek direction in putting forward recommendations to their Boards.

Sample comments include:

*“Better onboarding”*

*“Confidence built in SEAC reps to have real conversations”*

*“Training is required so that all members understand their role”*

The survey results suggest that while most respondents are aware of their role and responsibilities, more training would be helpful. Increased awareness of PAAC on SEAC resources and their use by SEACs for training would also help members.

## **PAAC on SEAC Awareness**

In 2020, 56% of respondents reported they were offered the *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook* always or most of the time, an increase from 46% in 2014. But in 2020, 39% had never seen or were not sure they had seen the Handbook, which is more than the 34% who indicated they had not seen the handbook in 2014.

In 2020, 63% of respondents had used the PAAC on SEAC website at least sometimes, which was unchanged from 2014. However, 40.7% had never heard of the website or were not sure in 2020, an increase from 37% in 2014.

Use of the PAAC on SEAC Annual Calendar for annual planning, at least sometimes, dropped slightly from 44% in 2014 to 37% in 2020, while about 55% continued to say they never used the calendar or were not sure.

Some sample comments include:

*"I learned about PAAC from my association not from SEAC."*

*"I was unaware there was a handbook"*

*"I have just now looked at this and it is an invaluable resource. I certainly wish I had known about this sooner!"*

*"I did not know about PAAC until now"*

*"We use it as a guide that we are addressing the topics noted."*

*"We don't always follow the timeline of the calendar but we do make sure the items on the calendar are included in our annual planning"*

The results of the survey questions about PAAC on SEAC indicate that there is still work to be done in increasing awareness of PAAC on SEAC and the resources such as the *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook*, PAAC on SEAC website and Annual Calendar. Making sure our website is highlighted in all correspondence to SEACs, and sending regular notices about PAAC on SEAC resources is recommended.

## **PAAC on SEAC 2020 SURVEY ACTION ITEMS**

### **Action Items for SEACs**

1. SEAC chairs to share the Results of the PAAC on SEAC 2020 Survey of SEAC Members report and Executive Summary with SEAC members
2. SEAC chairs to provide a copy, or the link, to the [PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook for SEAC Members](https://www.paac-seac.ca/HandbookforSEACMembers), particularly during orientation and training

3. Enhance training for all SEAC members and include awareness around key Ministry documents by providing access to key documents, such as [Special Education in Ontario Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Resource Guide](#) (Draft 2017); [Regulation 306 Special Education Programs and Services](#); and [Regulation 464/97 Special Education Advisory Committees](#)
4. Using the *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook* as a resource for orientation and annual training by:
  - Reviewing Handbook sections at SEAC meetings
  - Sharing the PAAC on SEAC PowerPoint regarding the Handbook
5. Establishing an annual calendar that allows SEAC to ensure all activities are planned in advance to provide for effective discussion and advice
6. Ensuring that the School Board website contain all pertinent current information on SEAC including meeting dates and times, meeting minutes, and information for the public about becoming a SEAC member.
7. Develop strategies for the sharing of information about SEAC with families and the general community to increase awareness of the role of SEAC and encourage public participation in annual consultations about the Special Education Plan
8. Circulating the SEAC Agenda and attachments at least 5 days in advance of the meeting
9. Promoting two way communication between SEAC and the Board of Trustees regarding issues related to the Special Education Plan and Budget, as well as special education programs and services

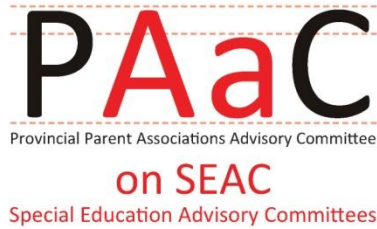
### **Action Items for Ministry of Education**

The following action items are intended to promote a more consistent understanding of SEAC Roles & Responsibilities.

1. Ministry to facilitate SEAC conferences, training sessions or webinars to provide information on SEAC Roles and Responsibilities
2. Ministry to include SEAC in the process for annual feedback on the Special Education Plan – Ministry to direct boards to share with SEAC t any communication about special education plans
3. Ministry to copy SEAC chairs on any memos that impact students with special education needs sent to boards
4. Ministry needs to maintain an active directory of all SEAC chair contact information that is updated annually

## Action Items for PAAC on SEAC

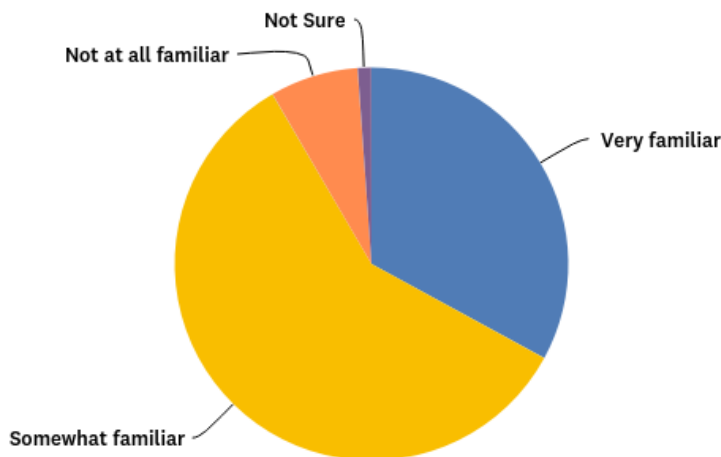
1. PAAC on SEAC to share the Survey Report with the Ministry of Education, the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) and with school boards to share with their SEACs.
2. Members of PAAC on SEAC to share with their SEAC representatives and communities, for example using social media, to promote awareness of PAAC on SEAC and the survey results.
3. Include a link to the [PAAC on SEAC website](http://www.paac-seac.ca/) (http://www.paac-seac.ca/) in every correspondence with SEACs and SEAC members.
4. Review the contents of the [\*PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook\*](#) and enhance existing effective practices related to:
  - Meeting Effectiveness
  - Meaningful Engagement
  - Orientation/Training
  - Recruitment
  - Special Education Plan Roles & Responsibilities



## Results of the PAAC on SEAC 2020 Survey of SEAC Members

### Comparison of 2020 survey results with SEAC surveys in 2014 and 2009

**Q 1 - Regulation 464/97 is a regulation under the Education Act that defines the membership, roles and responsibilities of SEAC. Are you familiar with the way Regulation 464/97 describes the role of SEAC?**



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Extremely familiar	0.00%	0
Very familiar	32.96%	59
Somewhat familiar	58.66%	105
Not so familiar	0.00%	0
Not at all familiar	7.26%	13
Not Sure	1.12%	2
TOTAL		179

### PAAC on SEAC Observations

Majority of respondents 59% were somewhat familiar, while only 33% were very familiar. More than 8% were not at all familiar or not sure. No respondents indicated they were extremely familiar.

No similar question in 2014 or 2009.

### Sample of Comments from Respondents:

*“Still there is no clear mandate for SEAC as we seem only exist for the use of the regulation but have no other function”*

*“I read something about it in the beginning but could not quote it or describe it other than in general terms.”*

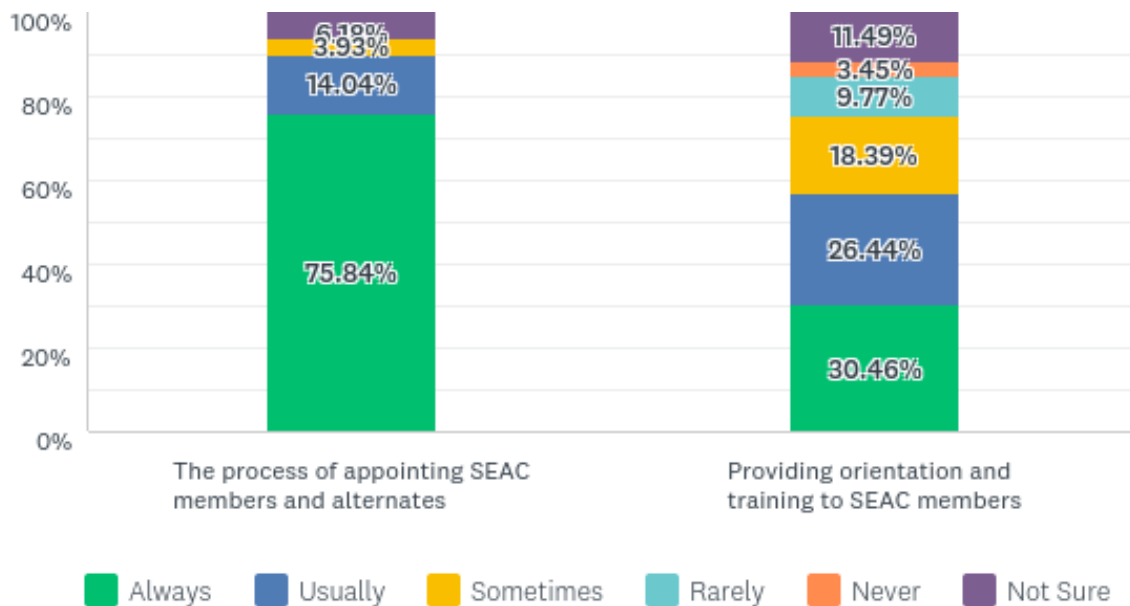
*“This area is pretty much left up to the individual to read. There is very little time spent on reviewing this with new members or old members.”*

*“We had a presentation from Superintendent to SEAC committee on this and Q & A.”*

### PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. SEAC members should be provided with the [PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook for SEAC Members \(2016\)](#) (PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook) and school boards should be providing training for SEAC members annually.
2. SEAC's should have terms of reference consistent with [Regulation 464/97](#).

## Q 2 – My school board complies with its mandate under Regulation 464/97 including:



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

#### (a) The process of appointing SEAC members and alternates

Always/Usually 89.8% in 2020; 90% in 2014; 83.0% in 2009

#### (b) Providing orientation.... and training to SEAC members:

Always/usually 56.7% in 2020; 53% for 2014; 40.0% in 2009

Majority of respondents in all three surveys reported that the process of appointing SEAC members is compliant with Regulation 464/97 and in the 2020 survey scored almost 90% in Always/usually. However, the scores continue to be lower for orientation and training.

### Sample of Comments from Respondents

*"We struggle with getting representation from local organizations. I'm not sure if that's an indication that parents are happy with the services their child is receiving, they can easily address issues with the teacher or if parents don't know the value of their SEAC."*

*"Our SEAC hasn't done training for quite a few years and there have been many new members since."*

## Sample of Comments from Respondents continued

*“A new orientation process established in 2019. An online orientation course made mandatory for all SEAC members.”*

*“I have been on a SEAC committee for two years and never received any kind of training.”*

*“My school board is excellent at identifying needs of members and providing them with the training.”*

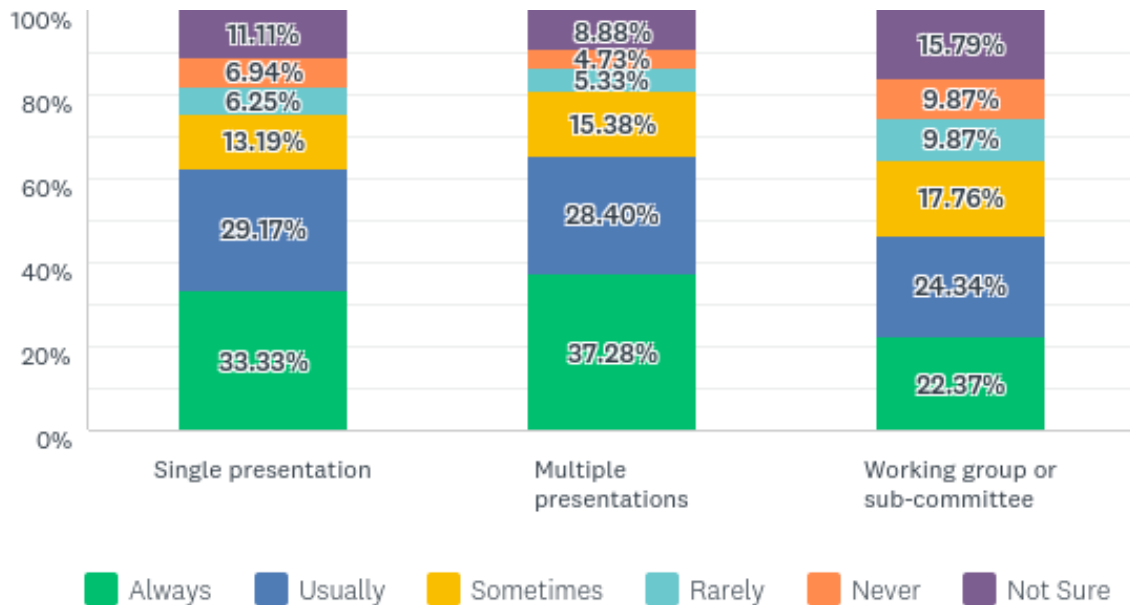
*“Compliance with appointment of members but poor re: orientation and training”*

## PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. SEAC should have a SEAC orientation manual that is provided to all new SEAC members.
2. New SEAC members should be provided with the link to [PAAC on SEAC website](http://www.paac-seac.ca/) (http://www.paac-seac.ca/) where they can view and/or download the following:
  - PAAC on SEAC – SEAC Orientation Presentation 2019 PowerPoint;
  - PAAC on SEAC – SEAC Orientation Presentation 2019 PDF;
  - PAAC on SEAC Annual Calendar for SEAC;
  - PAAC on SEAC Annual Report;
  - PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook for SEAC members;
  - Training Video Modules for SEAC members;
  - Other SEAC related material.



### Q 3 – My school board consults SEAC in the development of the Special Education Plan and/or annual amendments through:



#### PAAC on SEAC Observations

##### (a) Single presentation

Always/Usually: 62.24%

##### (b) Multiple presentations

Always/Usually: 65.47%

##### (c) Working group or subcommittee

Always/Usually: 46.36%

Unable to directly compare to previous year results because format of question is different.

15% indicated they had never had a single presentation on the Special Education Plan, or were not sure.

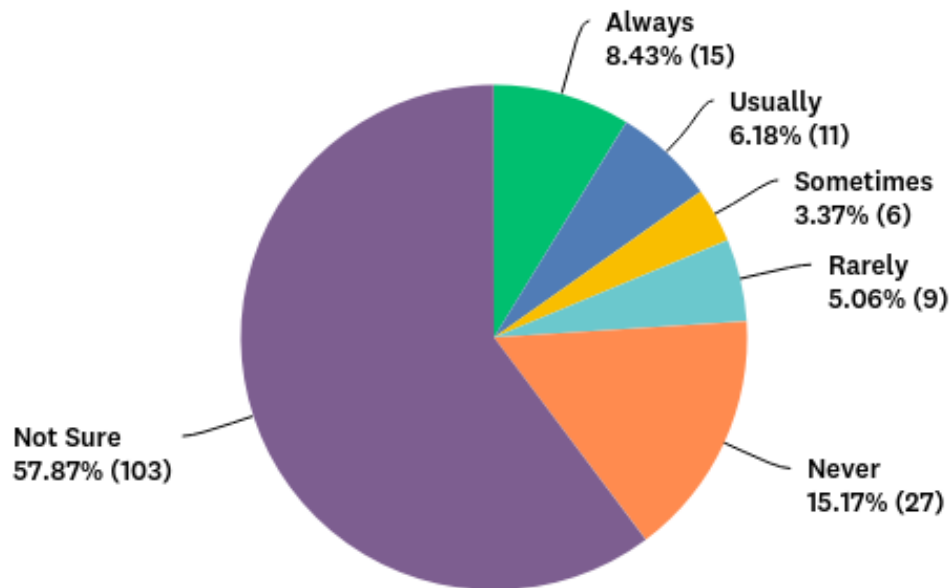
## Sample of Comments from Respondents

*"We are presented with data re spec ed numbers and EQAO, consulted on parent information documentation, but I do not recall seeing the Special Education Plan or asked for feedback on amendments"*

## PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. SEAC should review the Special Education Plan annually considering the following:
  - Compliance with Section B of the Ministry's *Special Education in Ontario Kindergarten to grade 12 Policy and Resource Guide*;  
[http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/os/2017/spec\\_ed\\_content.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/os/2017/spec_ed_content.html)
  - Compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC);
  - Consistency with the Board's mission statement, vision, goals and policies.
2. Indication that SEAC has been consulted on the Special Education Plan should be included in the Special Education Plan Checklist submitted by the board to the Ministry of Education each year.

**Q 4 – SEAC members may issue a Minority Report if they disagree with the decisions of the majority of members. In my school board minority reports from previous years are taken into account in developing the special Education Plan/amendments**



### **PAAC on SEAC Observations**

Always/Usually: 14.1% in 2020; Always/Most of the time 41% in 2014; 36% in 2009

Not Sure: 58.2% in 2020; 38% in 2014; 37% in 2009

### **Sample of Comments from Respondents**

*"I don't think there has been any minority reports while I have been on SEAC due to lack of motions other than passing the minutes"*

*"Members are openly scolded for bringing forward Minority reports. They are not included in the plan."*

*"They can issue a Minority Report, but it can be a lengthy process, with little return at the end."*

*"We have rarely had a Minority Report. I am confident that if we did, the school board would take it into account."*

## Sample of Comments from Respondents continued

*“Our SEAC has always worked together to promote the services required to reach our diverse population of students with special education needs. We rarely have a divided opinion at the table, and no issues in my long attendance at SEAC that prompted a Minority report.”*

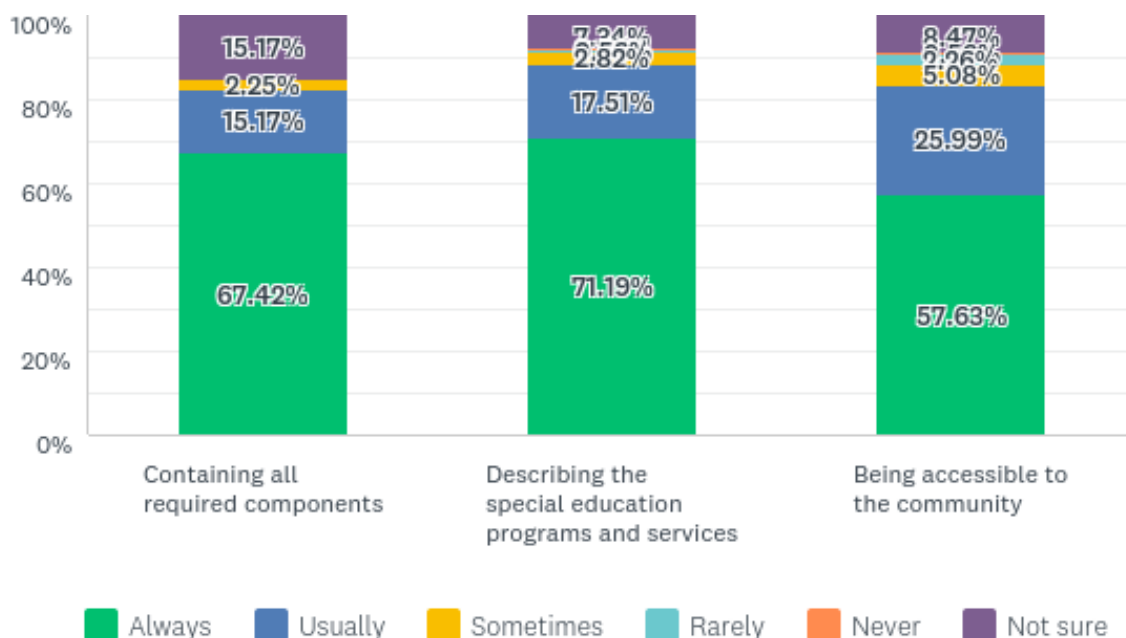
*“We have not had this situation in our Board.”*

*“People are not aware of Minority Reports and they are rarely used.”*

## PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. School board orientation for SEAC members should include information on school board governance model, parliamentary procedures, majority and minority reports, as well as training on making and voting on motions. (See [4.1 SEAC Orientation and Training](#) in *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook*)
2. SEAC members should have the opportunity to bring forward minority reports from their association. (See [5.5. Minority Reports](#) in *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook*)
3. SEAC should expect the board to report back on their response to majority and any minority reports regarding special education plan. Further any minority reports should be attached with the special education plan.

## Q 5 – My school board’s Special Education Plan complies with the Ministry of Education’s Standards for School Boards’ Special Education Plans



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

#### (a) Containing all required components

Always/Usually: 82.5% in 2020; 90% in 2014; 87% in 2009

#### (b) Describing the special education programs and services:

Always/Usually: 88.6% in 2020; 90% in 2014; 86.4% in 2009

#### (c) Being accessible to the community

Always/Usually: 83.5% in 2020; 75% in 2014; 71.6% in 2009

While scores are quite high (over 80% Always/Usually) there has been a slight decline in scores related to all required components and description of special education programs and services since 2009. Scores related to accessibility to community are higher than previous surveys.

## Sample of Comments from Respondents

*“Our SEAC has never reviewed the Ministry Standards for Spec Ed Plans. My impression is that some standards are not really reflected, or only in a very vague way (i.e. community consultation requirement)”*

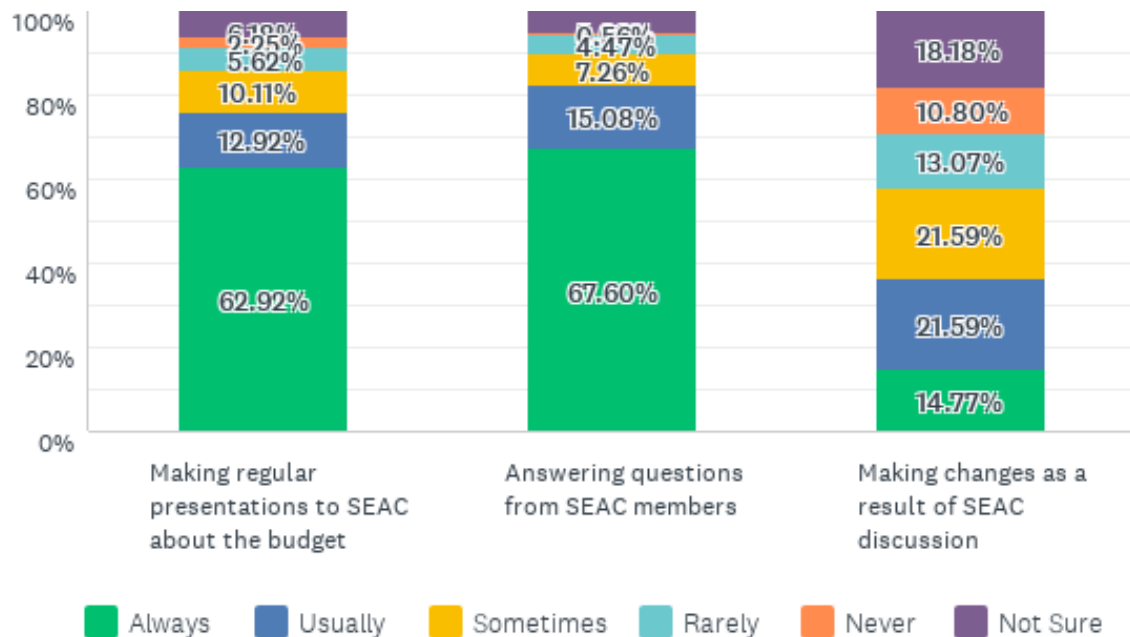
*“SEAC has worked together to come up with ways to make the Special Education Plan as well as other Special Education information available to the community on the website in understandable ways as well as encouraging schools to highlight on-line feedback opportunities via their newsletters to parents”*

*“I haven’t been given/seen the Ministry of education’s standards for Spec Ed plans”*

## PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. SEACs should review the Special Education Plan to ensure it reflects the feedback from the Ministry on the previous edition.  
(See [3.4 Special Education Plan](#) in *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook*)

## Q 6 – My school board consults SEAC about the Special Education Budget by:



## PAAC on SEAC Observations

### (a) Making regular presentations to SEAC about the budget:

Always/Usually: 75.7% in 2020; 75% in 2014; 74.1% in 2009

### (b) Answering questions from SEAC members:

Always/Usually: 82.6% in 2020; 90% in 2014; 85.7% in 2009

### (c) Making changes as a result of SEAC discussion:

Always/Usually 36% in 2020; 45% in 2014; 49.6% in 2009

In comparison with previous surveys, there has been a decline in the SEAC member feelings about whether their feedback has an impact on the budget. Making changes as a result of SEAC feedback is also declining.

## Sample of Comments from Respondents

*"We have budget specific presentations at 1-3 SEAC meetings between May and June. We always schedule 2 May meetings to allow ample opportunity for this, We usually get a budget update at one other meeting, at least, mid-year."*

*"It is a once a year presentation and not necessarily clear and understandable to everybody"*

*"Again we are asked to approve what has already been submitted or approved by the Board"*

*"They don't "consult" us. They just tell us "this is the budget"."*

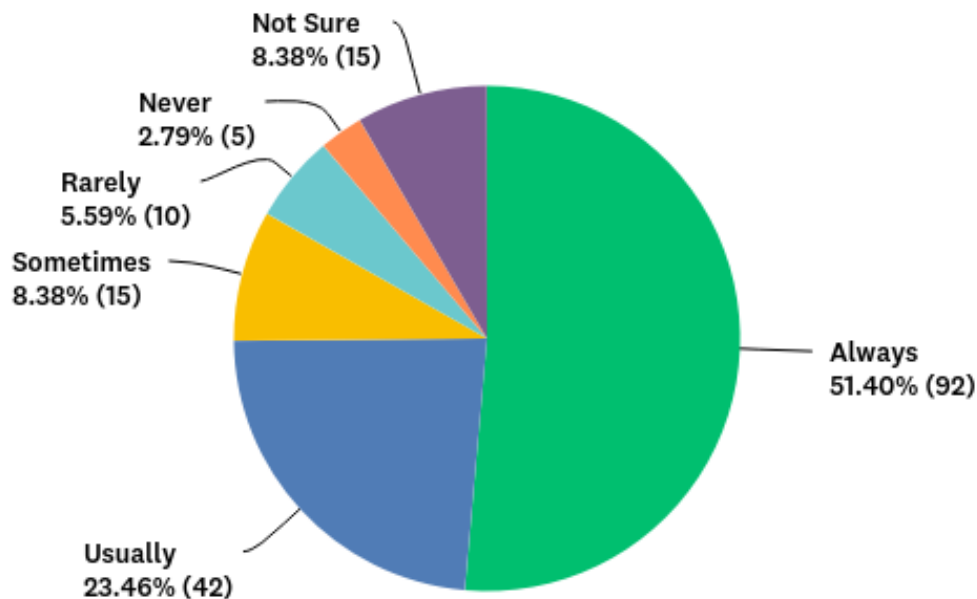
## PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. SEAC orientation should include education about reading and analysing balance sheets, income and revenue. Orientation should also include an overview of the school board grants, and details on funding for special education.
2. SEAC should be provided a summary balance sheet, income statement and a statement of change in financial position annually.
3. SEAC should receive a detailed list of expenses by category for the special education department with employee allocation where appropriate.

(See [3.6 Special Education Budget and Financial Statements](#) in *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook*)



## Q 7 – My SEAC has an annual plan for the topics to be covered throughout the year



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

Always/Usually: 74.7% in 2020; 2014/2009 (wording slightly different) “My SEAC plans in advance for the topics to be covered throughout the year” - Always/Usually: 86% in 2014; 73.6% in 2009.

2020 - 74% “Always/usually” is a decline since 2014 and consistent with responses in 2009.

### Sample of Comments from Respondents

*“We try to have information such as OnSIS reports brought to us each year but the board finds reasons not to bring it to us or they redact much of the information.”*

*“We keep a running list of future topics for discussion or presentation that arise from current topics. We try to work with staff about proactively ensuring they are actually scheduled at a follow-up meeting.”*

*“I was not aware of an annual plan for topics to be covered”*

## Sample of Comments from Respondents continued

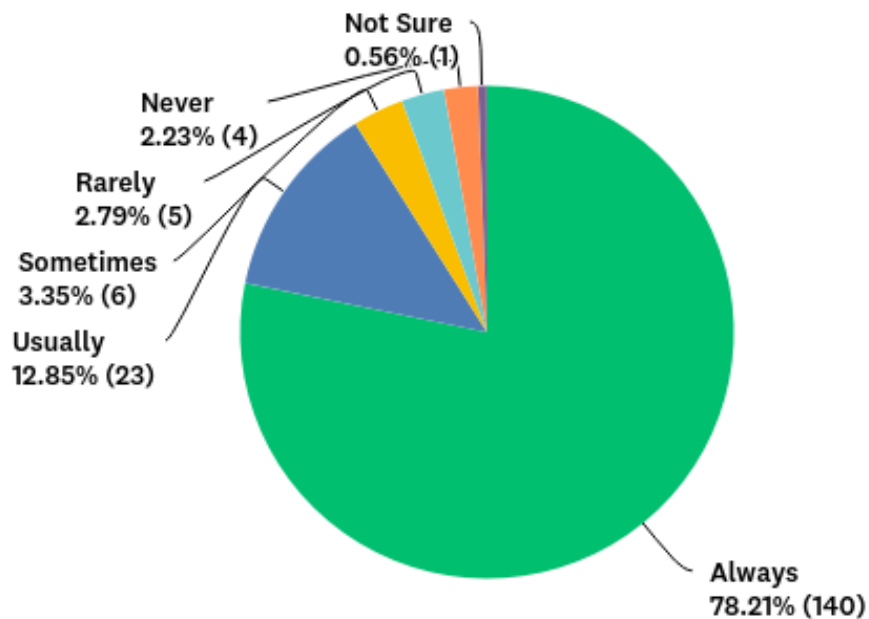
*“We created a plan and prioritized topics based on the vision but sometimes topics are added outside of the plan based on immediacy of needs that can't be planned”*

*“There are certain yearly recurring subjects that are preplanned. These are not shared broadly with the committee”*

## PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. SEAC should develop an annual calendar that covers the key responsibilities of SEAC and ensures that items are reviewed within the required timelines. SEAC may reference the PAAC ON SEAC Annual Calendar available at:  
<http://www.paac-seac.ca/annual-calendar/>
2. The annual SEAC calendar should be included with every meeting agenda and updated to reflect SEAC requested changes.

## Q 8 – Members of my SEAC receive the agenda and information for the meeting several days in advance.



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

Always/Usually: 91% in 2020; 91% in 2014; 82.3% in 2009

### Sample of Comments from Respondents

*“Business day before or day of”*

*“Friday nights for Tuesday meetings. A bit more time would be helpful.”*

*“There is a lot to read. I would appreciate getting it a week in advance. Typically, the package is emailed on the Friday before the Monday/Tuesday meeting and this is not enough lead time.”*

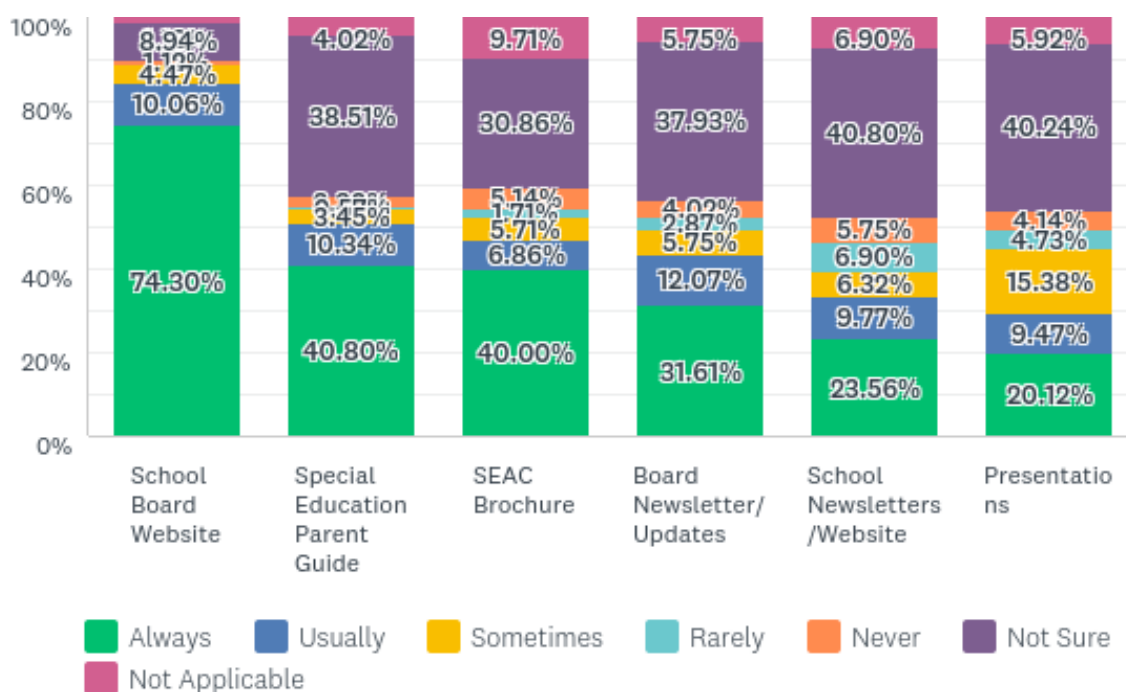
*“The length of time in advance that we receive the agenda package has been steadily decreasing over the years from a week in advance in the past to as close as the end of the last business day before the meeting lately.”*

## **PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices**

1. SEAC members should have adequate time to review materials prior to each meeting. A minimum of 5 days is optimal.
2. SEAC members should have an opportunity to provide items for the agenda of upcoming SEAC meetings.

(See [5.2 SEAC Agendas](#) in *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook*)

## Q 9 – Information about SEAC membership, roles and meeting times is available via:



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

#### (a) School Board Website

Always/Usually(Most of the time) 84.3 in 2020; 84% in 2014; 80.6% in 2009

#### (b) Special Education Parent Guide

Always/Usually(Most of the time): 42.4% in 2020; 64% in 2014; 63.2% in 2009

#### (c) SEAC Brochure

Always/Usually(Most of the time): 46.6% in 2020; 61% in 2014; 51.3% in 2009

#### (d) Board Newsletters/Updates

Always/Usually(Most of the time): 43.4% in 2020; 41% in 2014; 27.9% in 2009

#### (e) School Newsletters/Website

Always/Usually(Most of the time): 33.0% in 2020; 21% in 2014; 19.8% in 2009

#### (f) Presentations

Always/Usually(Most of the time): 29.2% in 2020; 34% in 2014; 29 % in 2009

- Number of respondents reporting always/usually is less than in 2014.

## Sample of Comments from Respondents

*“Brochure is new this year”*

*“The brochure is available on the website, but special education items need to be searched. If you don't know what you're looking for, it's challenging.”*

*“SEAC has been invited to events to have information at a table. But not asked to speak”*

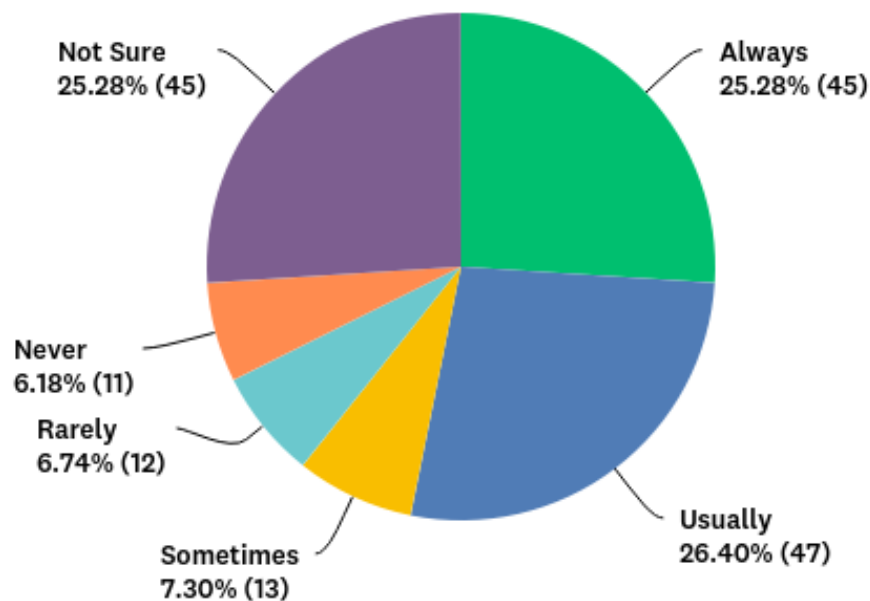
*“Board website is difficult to navigate. Information is hard to find.”*

## PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. School board websites should be used to promote SEAC activities and meetings, and to seek new SEAC members. SEAC materials should be updated regularly.
2. School boards should develop mechanisms, including e-blasts to communicate important information about special education and SEAC. This could include SEAC member recruitment notices, meeting information, surveys, feedback links and special events of interest to the families. SEAC can provide advice on content and language used to support easy understanding of materials.

(See Effective Practices to increase awareness of SEAC in [3.7 Public Access and Consultation](#) in *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook*)

**Q 10 – Preamble re: Ontario School Information System (ONSIS). My school board shares ONSIS special education student data with SEAC in a timely manner.**



### **PAAC on SEAC Observations**

Always/Usually: 51.4% in 2020;

In 2014/2009 question worded differently: *“My school board provides the October Report and other relevant statistical information to SEAC in a timely manner”*

2014 64% Always/Most of the time; 2009 60.3% Always/Most of the time.

### **Sample of Comments from Respondents**

*“I personally don't find this information to accurately reflect the number and variety of students being served. With so many skipping the identification process, these numbers are not reflective of the actual numbers. Also, there is no mechanism to reflect two diagnoses such as autism and deaf/HOH”*

*“It seems our board is unwilling to share this and seems to withhold this information when asked”.*

## Sample of Comments from Respondents continued

*“The request for this information is regularly challenged. When it has been stated that this is a SEAC best practice, response is that it is not required. Some members have also stated this information is irrelevant anyway as it is not accurate.”*

*“I have never heard of this”*

*“When specifically requested by a SEAC member, or incidentally in a presentation”*

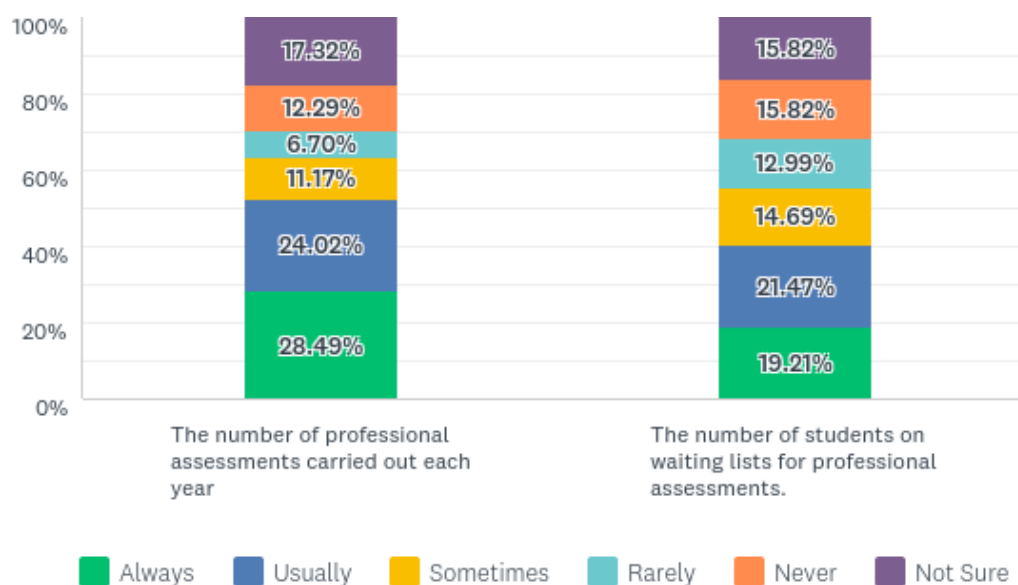
*“Information is brought to SEAC by Special Education Dept. regularly; additional details are provided when committee members want further info.”*

## PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. SEAC should be provided ONSiS data on the number of students receiving special education programs and services, including a breakdown of students by exceptionality and placement. Data should be the most current and periodically comparative data should be shared about changes over time.
2. The dates for sharing of student data should be added to the SEAC annual calendar.



## Q 11 – My SEAC is informed about the professional assessments carried out by the school board personnel including:



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

#### (a) The number of professional assessments carried out each year

Always/Usually: 52.4% in 2020

#### (b) The number of students on waiting lists for professional assessments

Always/Usually: 40.3% in 2020

2014/2009 two part question was combined into one *“My SEAC is informed about the number of professional assessments carried out by school board personnel each year, and the number of students on waiting lists for professional assessments.”*

Always/Usually (Most of the time): 50% in 2014; 50.7% in 2009

### Sample of Comments from Respondents

*“They state there is no waitlist”*

*“The board claims they don't have a "wait list" for assessments. They claim the lists are with the school and they can not obtain accurate information from them.”*

*“The wait list is a closely guarded secret. Numbers are only revealed when there is a desire to show the public how funds are being used”*

## Sample of Comments from Respondents continued

*“Due to unexpected additional funding, our Board was able to do extra assessments during the summer months of 2019.”*

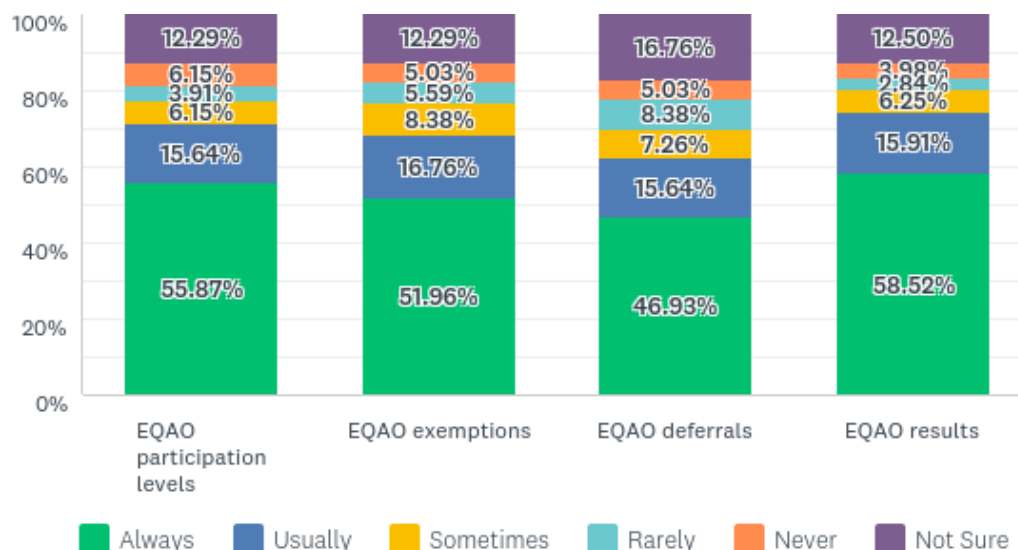
*“Number of assessments completed and positive results are much more readily shared than ongoing waiting lists.”*

*“My board says there aren't any "wait lists" although there are people waiting.”*

## PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. The school board should provide a summary report on annual professional assessments that includes:
  - The number of students waiting for assessment at the start and end of the previous school year by type of assessment.
  - The number of students referred by type of assessment, and student assessment completed by type of assessment
  - The minimum, average and maximum number of days a student waited for each assessment type from referral to completion and presentation to the student or family in the previous year.
  - The targeted wait time for assessing students by assessment type.
  - Plans to close the gap between targeted wait times and the average waiting days for assessment.
  - How the board is ensuring equitable access to professional assessments to support individualized programming.
2. SEACs can refer to the following section of the Ministry of Education document [Special Education in Ontario Part B: Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans: Educational and Other Assessments](#)

## Q 12 – My school board tracks and reports to SEAC on the EQAO results for students with special education needs including:



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

#### (a) EQAO participation levels

Always/Usually: 71.4% in 2020

#### (b) EQAO exemptions

Always/Usually: 68.5% in 2020

#### (c) EQAO deferrals

Always/Usually: 62.4% in 2020

#### (d) EQAO results

Always/Usually: 74.3% in 2020

2014/2009: (Combined question) “My school board tracks and reports to SEAC on the participation levels, exemptions, deferrals and achievement of its students with special education needs in all the EQAO testing.”

Always/Most of the time: 68% in 2014; 56.6% in 2009

## Sample of Comments from Respondents

*"We would like to see the information by exceptionality"; difficult to do when ½ are not IPRC'd"*

*"I don't think we ever talked about EQAO results at a SEAC"*

*"EQAO is not discussed at all"*

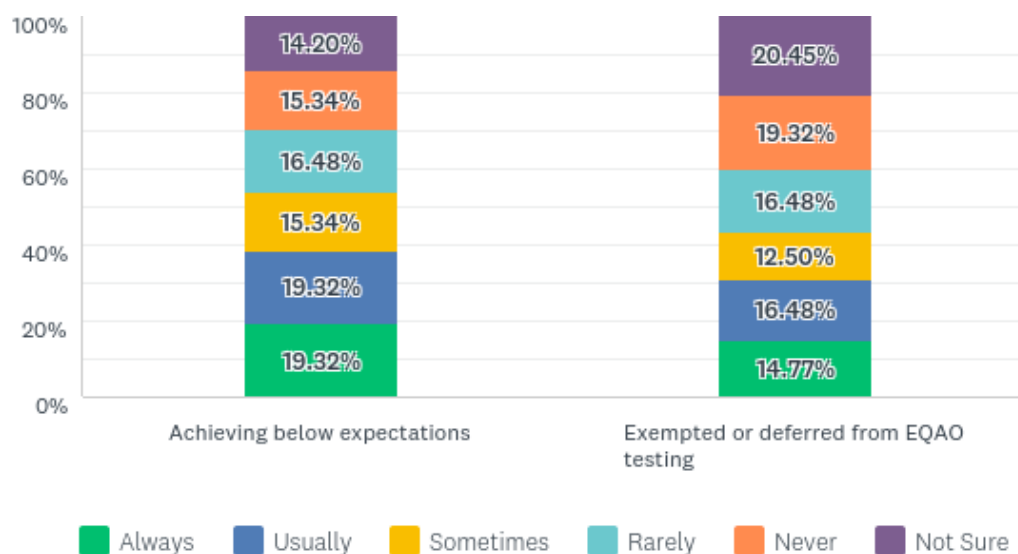
*"This is one area that seems to be discussed at length"*

*"This is usually addressed during one meeting each year."*

## PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. SEACs should be getting an annual report based on the previous year's EQAO results for students with special education needs.
2. The report should include EQAO results for all students by exceptionality (for those students who have an IPRC), as well as those with an IEP.
3. SEACs should have access to historical EQAO data. .

## Q 13 – My school board involves SEAC in planning how to assist students with special education needs who are:



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

#### (a) Achieving below expectations

Always/Usually: 38.9% in 2020; Never: 15.4% in 2020

#### (b) Exempted or deferred from EQAO testing

Always/Usually: 31.4% in 2020; Never: 19.4% in 2020

2009/2014 question (different wording) *“My school board involves SEAC in planning how to assist students with special education needs who are doing poorly in or who are exempted from the EQAO testing.”*

- Always/Most of the time: 27% in 2014; 27.9% in 2009
- Never: 29% in 2014; 30.9% in 2009

### Sample of Comments from Respondents

*“Our Board advises SEAC on how they are assisting these students to achieve their goals.”*

*“SEAC would not be involved in the planning; however, we share our Professional Development plans to support closing gaps in our District.”*

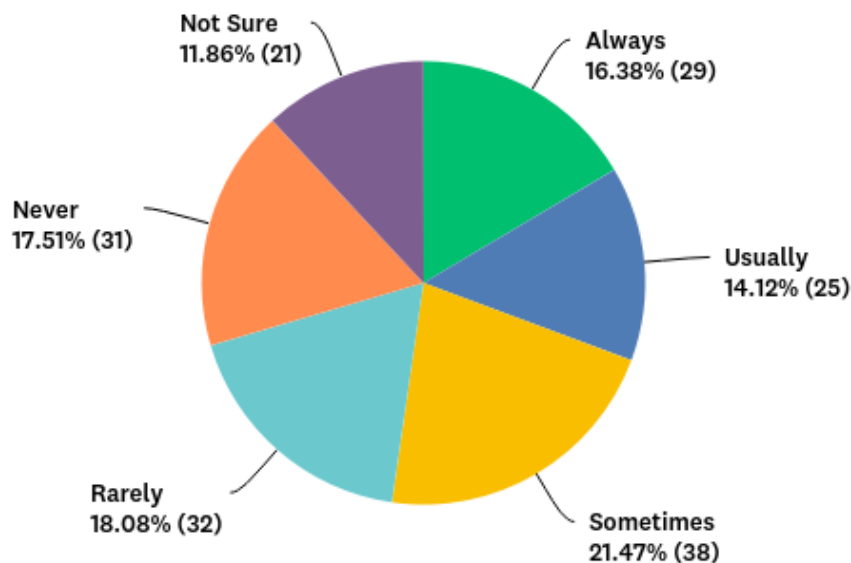
## **Sample of Comments from Respondents continued**

*“This is dependent on the student's special need. If the student is Autistic, yes. If the child has FASD or another less recognized developmental condition, no.”*

## **PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices**

1. Collecting and analysing data about EQAO results for students with special education needs is critical for effective program planning and evaluation.

## Q 14 – My school board includes SEAC in the planning and provision of professional development for teachers.



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

Always/Usually/(Most of the time): 30.1% in 2020; 29% in 2014; 25% in 2009

Never: 17.6% in 2020; 23% in 2014; 24.3% in 2009

### Sample of Comments from Respondents

*“SEAC would not be planning PD; however, they are involved in discussions of PD.”*

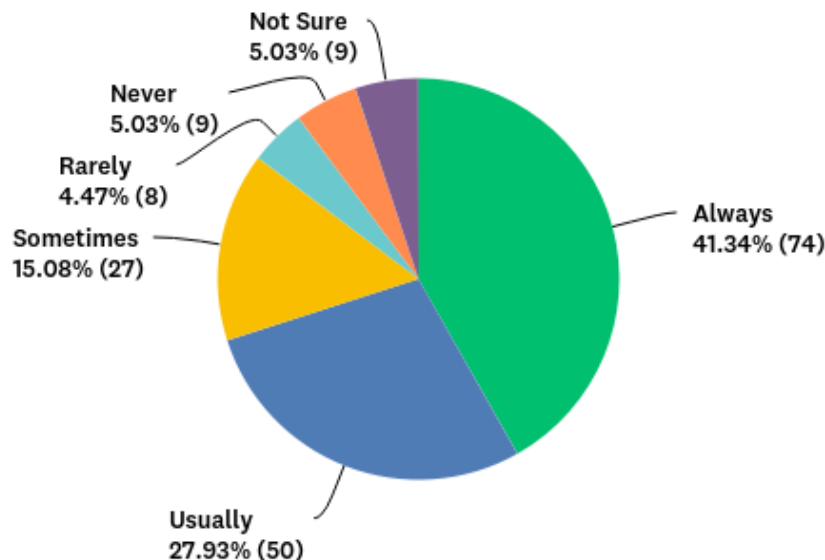
*“Special Education Department staff take information shared by SEAC and incorporate identified areas of need into their training for teachers. Feedback is also provided on what professional development is occurring for teachers regarding Special Education”*

## PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. SEAC members should be invited to provide input and resources for professional development related to students with special education needs.
2. SEACs should receive an annual report from the previous year of professional development about special education activities. The report should include a summary of:
  - Number of participants;
  - Number of times offered;
  - Target staff (administrators, teachers, educational assistants);
  - Program topic.
3. SEACs can refer to the following section of Ministry of Education document [Special Education in Ontario Part B: Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans: Staff Development](#)



**Q 15 – My school board involves SEAC in a meaningful way in discussions regarding the impact of school board policies, such as safe schools and accessibility, on students with special education needs**



**PAAC on SEAC Observations**

Always/Usually: 69.1% in 2020

2014/2009: (question worded differently) *“My school board involves SEAC in a meaningful way in discussions regarding the way special education students are treated under school board policies such as safe schools and character education policies.”*

Always/Most of the time: 61% in 2014; 58.8% in 2009

**Sample of Comments from Respondents**

*“I am not sure meaningful is the best description (implying we effect change?), but we are involved in discussions”*

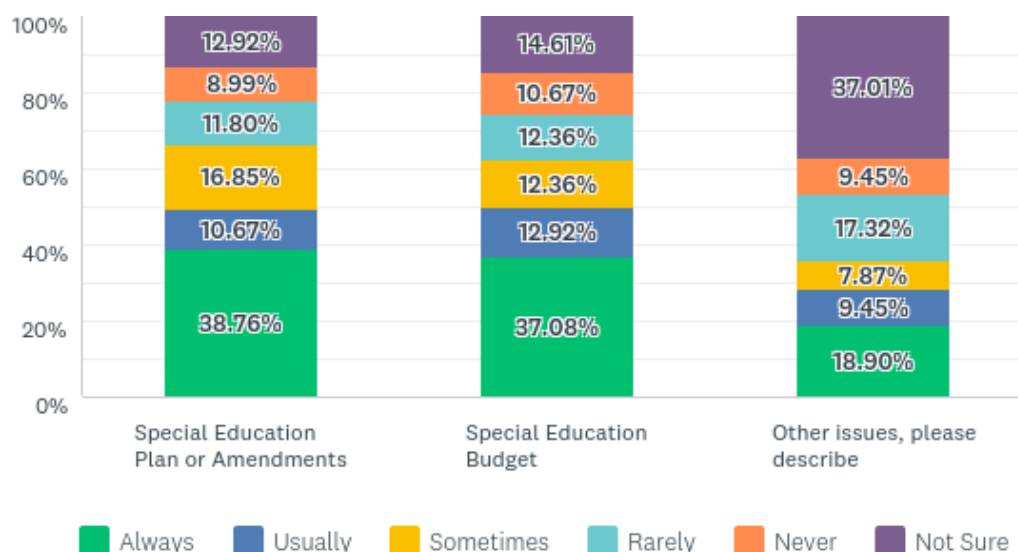
*“There are no discussions we are told what the board is doing.”*

*“I am not sure it is in a meaningful way. We review polices and have an opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions. I am less sure the questions and comments have any impact on the polices”*

## **PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices**

1. SEACs should be consulted in the creation or update of any policy that would affect students with special education needs. (See [3.3 Special Education Programs and Services Development and Delivery](#) in *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook*)

## Q 16 – My SEAC makes motions to the Board of Trustees about:



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

#### (a) Special Education Plan or Amendments

Always/Usually (Most of the time): 49.2% in 2020; 50% in 2014; 62.2% in 2009

#### (b) Special Education Budget

Always/Usually (Most of the time): 49.7% in 2020; 53% in 2014; 57.6% in 2009

#### (c) Other issues, please describe

Always/Usually (Most of the time): 28.4% in 2020; 47% in 2014; 44.4% in 2009

Significant number of responses “never/not sure”. Decline in all areas since previous surveys

### Sample of Comments from Respondents

*“There is a deficit of clear reporting measures regarding Spec Ed student achievement and a reluctance to provide such reporting. This prevents SEAC from identifying important issues that need to be addressed. This is a board with aversion to objective performance measures. I don't know how anyone could run an organization this large without some of this basic information. Information”*

*“Our SEAC is not encouraged to make motions to the board. it never comes up.”*

## Sample of Comments from Respondents continued

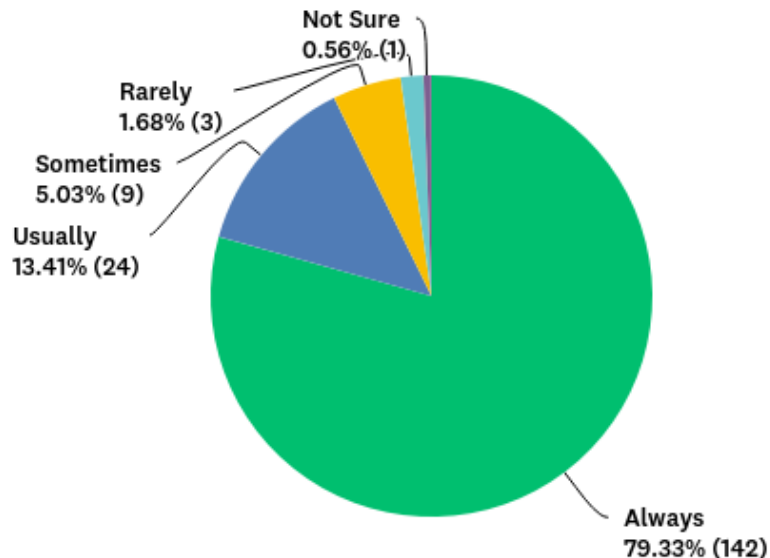
*“With the past two superintendents, SEAC voices have become much more accepted and participation has been encouraged and welcomed”*

*“SEAC only makes motions on approval of the agenda, approval of the minutes, and absentees.”*

## PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. SEAC members should be familiar with the roles and responsibilities of SEAC defined in [Regulation 464/97](#) with regard to the special education plan, budget and programs and services. SEAC is required to be consulted and provide advice on these items. This may take the form of motions and/or recommendations to the Trustees.
2. SEAC Members should be familiar with the Standards for School Board Special Education Plans (Part B in the [Special Education in Ontario Policy and Resource Guide \(2017\)](#)).
3. SEAC members should have a clear process for the making of motions and for expectations of responses from the trustees.

## Q 17 – My SEAC encourages input and discussion from members on all presentations



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### PAAC on SEAC Observations

Always/Usually (Most of the time): 92.7% in 2020; 91% in 2014 (2009 question not comparable)

### Sample of Comments from Respondents

*“Members are encouraged to ask questions, opportunity is provided at the meeting as well as further comments can be sent in via email upon further reflection.”*

*“Meetings are always too packed. The same people use most of the allotted time, and video-conferencing is not available. Telephone conferencing is available, but does not allow for adequate two way engagement.”*

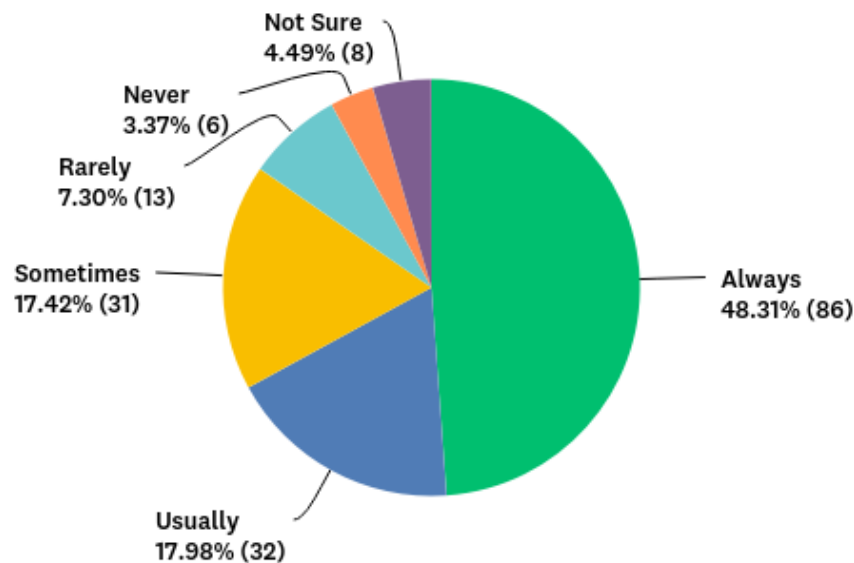
*“Presentations are more accurately described as lectures. We can ask questions but there it feels more like information sharing rather than collaborative practices for change.”*

*“We are time limited to 3 minutes per member. It’s not enough time for complex issues and larger reports.”*

## **PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices**

1. More collaborative approaches to meaningful engagement with SEAC are identified in the PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices for SEAC Members Handbook (See [4.2 SEAC Member Skills and Relationships](#))
2. SEAC members should have presentations in advance of meetings to prepare for their participation and also be provided multiple opportunities for input.

**Q 18 – As a local association member, I feel that my opinions are respected and considered in the development of special education policy, programs and services**



**PAAC on SEAC Observations**

Always/Usually(Most of the time): 66.1% in 2020; 71% in 2014; 56.7% in 2009

(Note: the wording of the question was slightly different in 2014 as well as 2009)

2014: “ SEAC members opinions are respected and considered in the development of special education policy at my school board).”

2009: “As a parent association representative I feel that my opinions are respected and considered in the development of special education policy at my school board.”

## Sample of Comments from Respondents

*"We receive the information and are rarely asked for input, or even have opportunities for discussion. Sit and Get. Horrible."*

*"I would say that my opinions are respected however they do not necessarily translate into changes to program development, policy or service delivery."*

*"I do not feel that I had any impact in the development of special education policy, programs and services."*

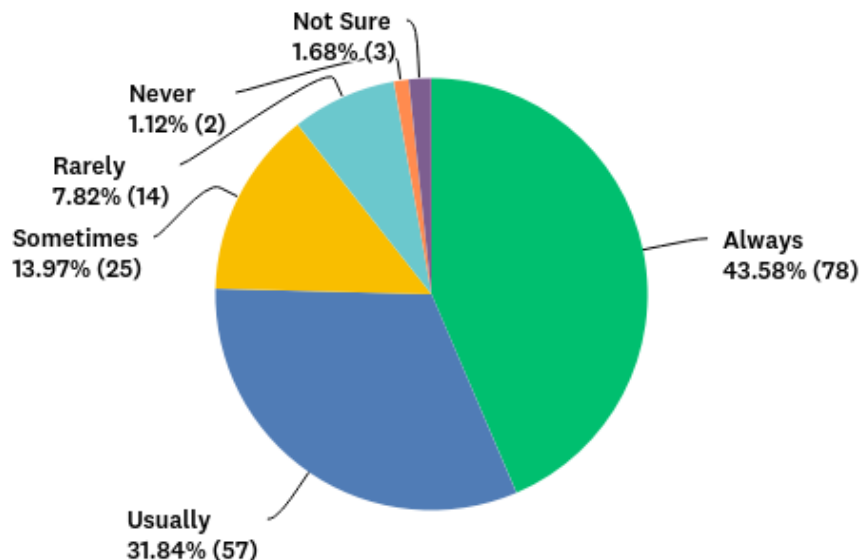
*"Very good hard working group"*

## PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. SEAC meetings and activities should promote effective collaboration in the development and review of programs and services.



## Q 19 – Local association members of my SEAC share information about their organization on a regular basis.



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

Always/Usually(Most of the time): 75.3% in 2020; 82% in 2014; 68.4% in 2009

### Sample of Comments from Respondents

*“Each association member is giving time on the agenda each meeting to share updates.”*

*“Some association do, others do not. However, it is often just about upcoming events.”*

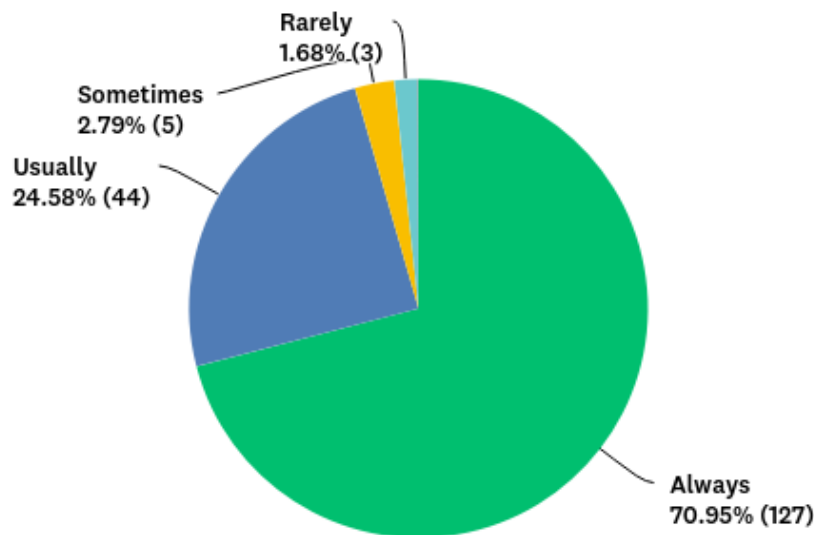
*“only the Board members typically provide updates”*

*“Monthly reports of local activities are given.”*

### PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. See [6.2 Representing the Local and Provincial Parent Association](#) in *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook* regarding Association Reports.
2. Associations should provide reports, opinions, support and feedback to their local SEAC representatives. SEAC information is not confidential, and should be shared with associations.

## Q 20 – Members of SEAC talk to each other and discuss different points of view respectfully



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### PAAC on SEAC Observations

Always/Usually (Most of the time): 95.5% in 2020; 88% in 2014; 79.4% in 2009

(Note: 2009 question specified parent association members)

### Sample of Comments from Respondents

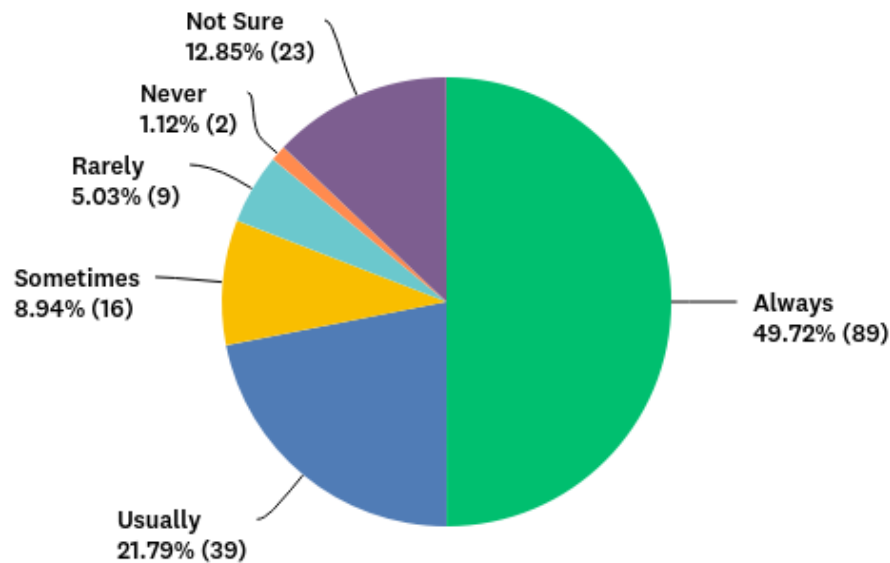
*"I did not often observe discussion involving different points of view."*

*"Very positive team"*

### PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. See [Section 5: SEAC Meeting Processes](#) in *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook* for information on meeting practices.
2. SEAC members should conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner.
3. It is up to the Chair to maintain order in a meeting. The Chair may temporarily adjourn meetings should tempers flair, to allow parties time to calm down.
4. SEAC's role is to address systemic concerns and changes.
5. SEAC should not be discussing individual, students, staff or schools. Discussions must not identify specific students.

## Q 21 – Local association members have served as Chair of my SEAC



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

Always/Usually (Most of the time): 71.9% in 2020; 58.8% in 2009

Yes: 79% in 2014

### Sample of Comments from Respondents

*"We have had the same chair for many (10+) years"*

*"It's been the same person for years"*

*"Alternates every 2 years from trustee to association."*

*"In alternating years the chair or vice chair is a local association rep. A trustee serves in the other role."*

*"A trustee from the school board who is a member chairs our SEAC and is duly nominated and elected."*

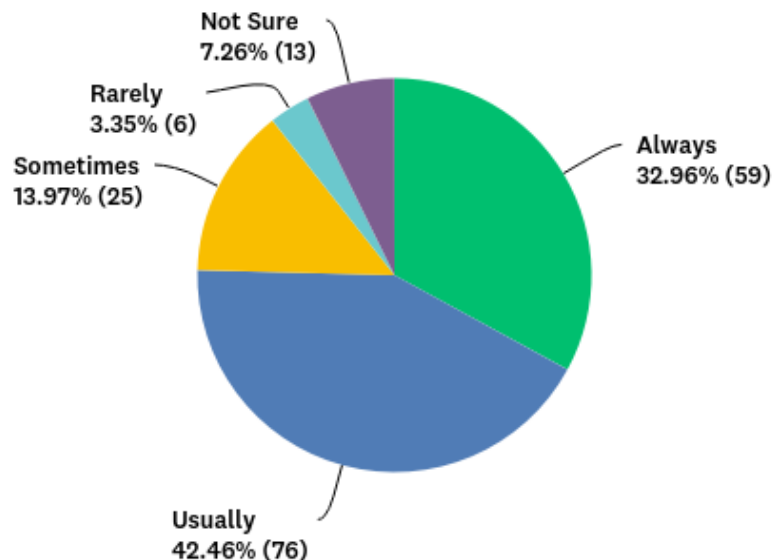
*"Bi-annual rotation between Trustee and Associations"*

*"For a while it was a Trustee, but for quite a while now it has been a local parent rep"*

## PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. See [5.6 Chair and Vice Chair Appointment and Roles](#) in *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook* regarding Chair and Vice-Chair roles.
2. [Regulation 464/97](#) only requires the SEAC Chair to be a member of the committee, but it does not differentiate between trustees, association, community or indigenous representatives for this role.

## Q 22 – My SEAC is able to recruit and retain local association members.



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

Always/Usually(Most of the time): 75.4% in 2020; 68% in 2014; 62.5% in 2009

There is a differentiation between large board vs smaller boards in respondents. Respondents from larger boards report having competition for available seats while smaller boards are unable to fill all 12 members.

### Sample of Comments from Respondents

*"There are some members who have had a spot on the committee for a number of years; I was unable to continue to commit given the night of the meetings conflicted with other family obligations. Also, I did not feel I was having an impact so recently stepped down as a member."*

*"Not a lot of local associations, way too many community partners (paid employees - not parents)"*

*"It has been difficult to recruit new members."*

## Sample of Comments from Respondents continued

*“Numbers are still low considering the vast geography that the school board covers. Not familiar with a robust recruitment campaign.”*

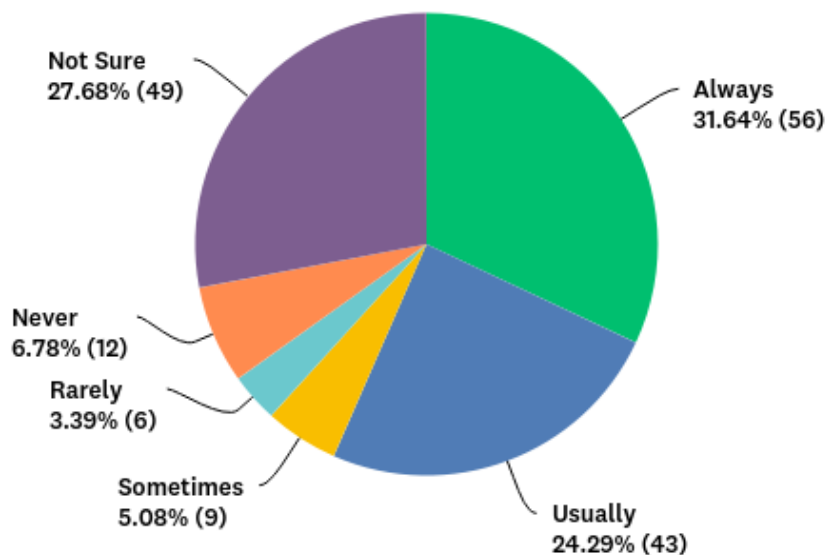
*“There are some changes from time to time but this SEAC has maintained a core group of association members/agencies who work closely with the system.”*

*“We have the same organizations represented each year, no new organizations”*

## PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. See [2.7 Membership Nomination Process](#) in *PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook* for recruitment practices.
2. Follow the definition of *Local Association* in [Regulation 464/97](#) when selecting association members.
3. SEAC meetings should be publicized and SEAC recruitment should be promoted on the board’s website.
4. SEAC should send letters to ask local associations to nominate qualified representatives
5. SEAC should encourage others - who have an interest in issues regarding special needs students and who meet the qualifications - to nominate themselves as community representatives.

## Q 23 – My SEAC shares the PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook with its members



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

Always/Usually(Most of the time): 55.9% in 2020; 46% in 2014; 62.5% in 2009

Majority, 56% sharing handbook but 39 % did not seem to be aware of the handbook, compared to 34% in 2014

### Sample of Comments from Respondents

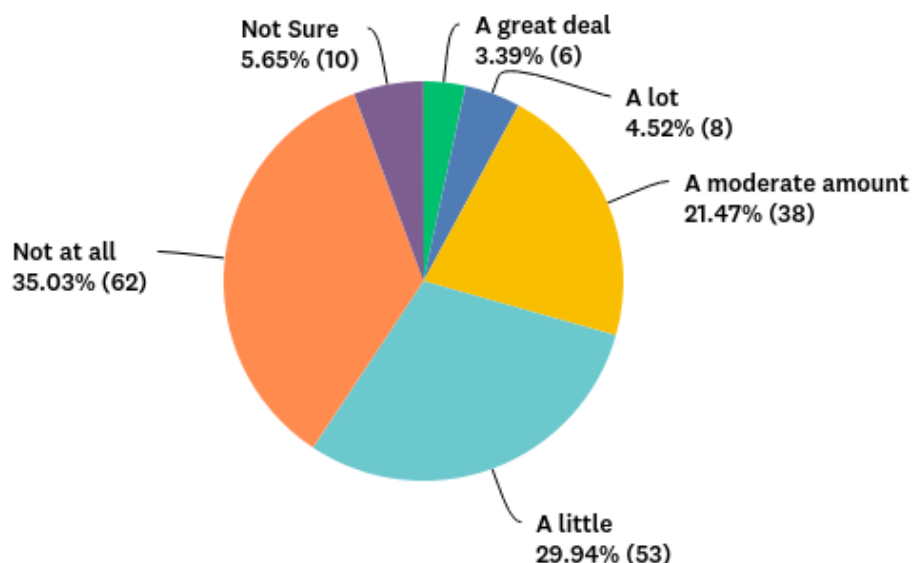
*"I learned about PAAC from my association not from SEAC."*

*"I was unaware there was a handbook"*

### PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. [PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook](#) should be shared annually with all SEAC members.
2. SEAC members should receive training and orientation annually.

## Q 24 – As a SEAC member I have used the PAAC on SEAC website



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

A great deal/ A lot: 8% in 2020; Always/Most of the time: 17% in 2014

A moderate amount/A little: 51.7% in 2020; Sometimes: 46% in 2014

Not at all/Not sure: 40.3% in 2020; Never/Not sure: 37% in 2014

(Not in 2009 survey)

### Sample of Comments from Respondents

*"I have just now looked at this and it is an invaluable resource. I certainly wish I had known about this sooner!"*

*"I did not know about PAAC until now"*

*"Relevant sections are often shared by LDAO when Diane Wagner sends out her quarterly information"*

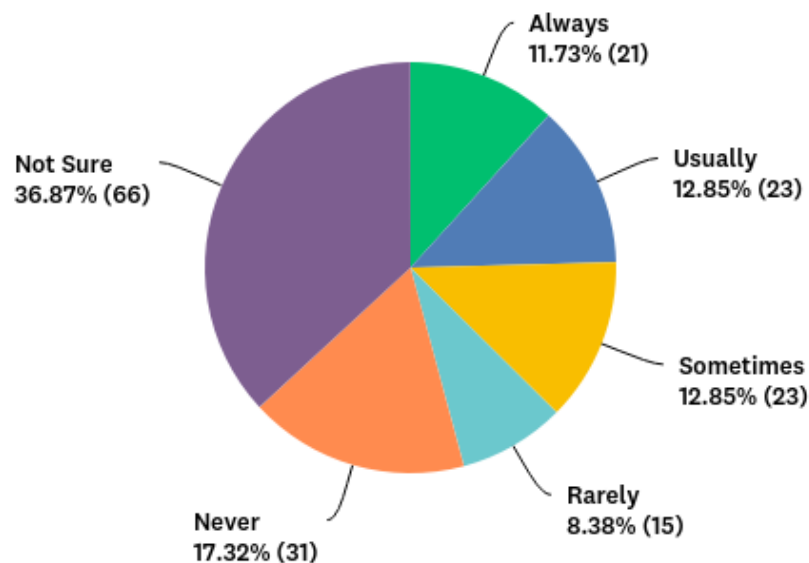
*"I'm not clear on what the purpose of this would be; it would have likely been helpful to have had an orientation on this."*

### PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. PAAC on SEAC website should be shared annually with SEAC members
2. SEAC members should receive training and orientation annually.



## Q 25 My SEAC references the PAAC on SEAC Annual Calendar (“for annual planning” in 2014 survey)



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

Always/Usually (Most of the time): 24.6% in 2020; 20% in 2014

Never/Not sure: 54% in 2020; 56% in 2014 (26% not sure)

While the results have improved slightly from 2014, a majority of respondents are still not referencing the PAAC on SEAC annual calendar, and the percentage of respondents who were “unsure” about this has increased from 26% to 37% of respondents.

### Sample of Comments from Respondents

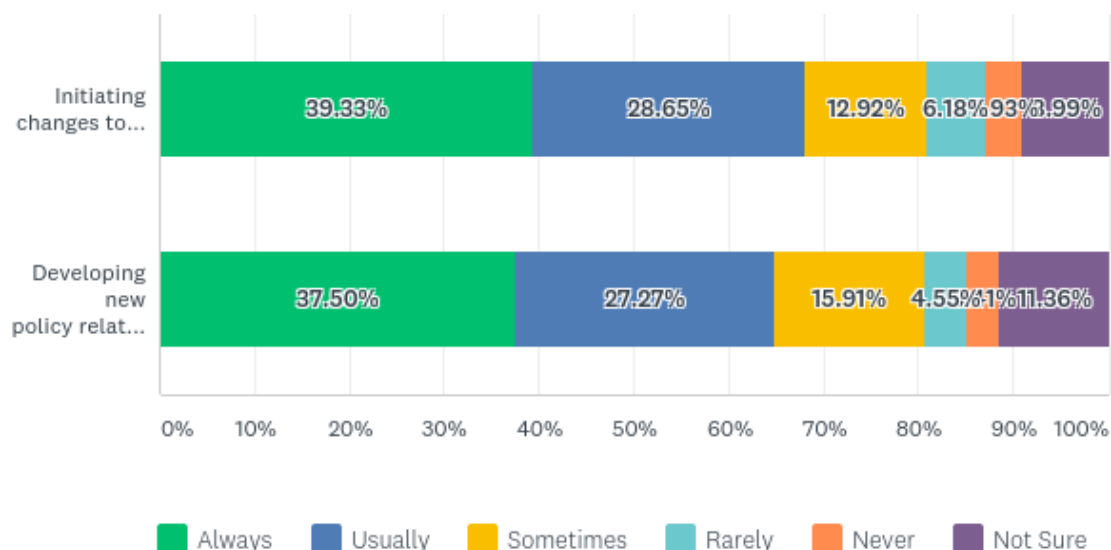
*“We use it as a guide that we are addressing the topics noted.”*

*“We don’t always follow the timeline of the calendar but we do make sure the items on the calendar are included in our annual planning”*

### PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. [PAAC on SEAC annual calendar](#) is a valuable resource for SEACs as a model for annual planning

## Q 26 – My school board seeks feedback from SEAC members when:



### PAAC ON SEAC Observations

#### (a) Initiating changes to policy related to special education

Always/Usually: 67.8% in 2020

Never/Not Sure: 12.96% in 2020

#### (b) Developing new policy related to special education

Always/Usually: 64.6% in 2020

Never/Not Sure: 14.86% in 2020

2014 question worded differently *“My school board consults with SEAC when developing or changing policy related to special education.”*

Always/Most of the time: 69% in 2014

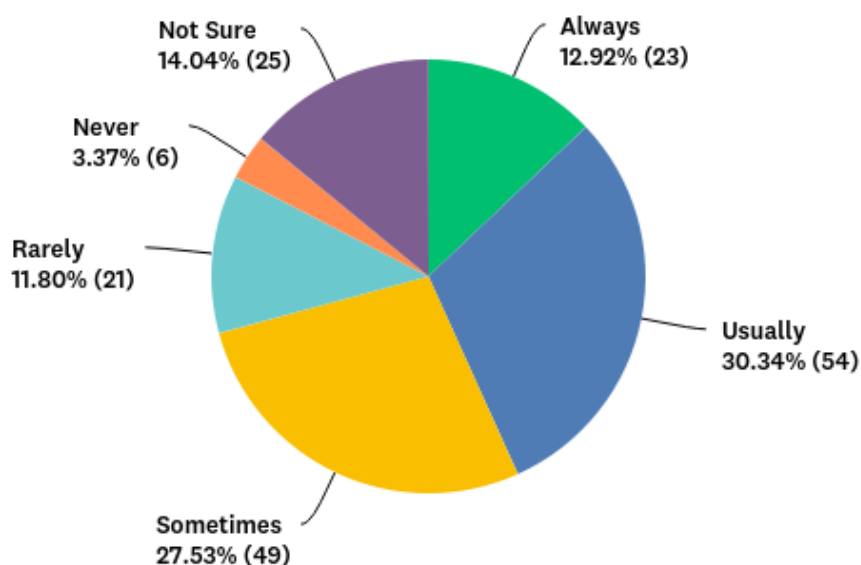
Never/Not Sure: 12% in 2014

Results are similar with most respondents indicating that boards regularly seek feedback from SEAC, however 20% indicated this occurred rarely or they were unsure.

### PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. SEAC members should be made aware of any policies that effect Special Education students and have opportunity to provide feedback

## Q 27 – Members of SEAC are effective at initiating changes in policy and procedures that directly impact on students with special education needs



### PAAC ON SEAC Observations

Only 12.92% of respondents felt that they were “always” effective at initiating changes to special education policy and procedures; only 43% felt that this was the case “usually” or “always”. 15% of respondents felt this was “rarely” or “never” the case, and 14% were “not sure”.

There were no comparable questions in 2014 or 2009

### Sample of Comments from Respondents

*“I find that changes in policy & procedure are often initiated by the Special Education staff, presented to SEAC for discussion, changes are made based on those discussions but overall it is the Special Education Dept. leading the changes.”*

## Sample of Comments from Respondents continued

*“SEAC is not consulted. Policy and Procedures go from Policy Committee to the Board of Trustees but does not come to SEAC. Neither the Superintendent nor the Trustees share this information in their reports to SEAC.”*

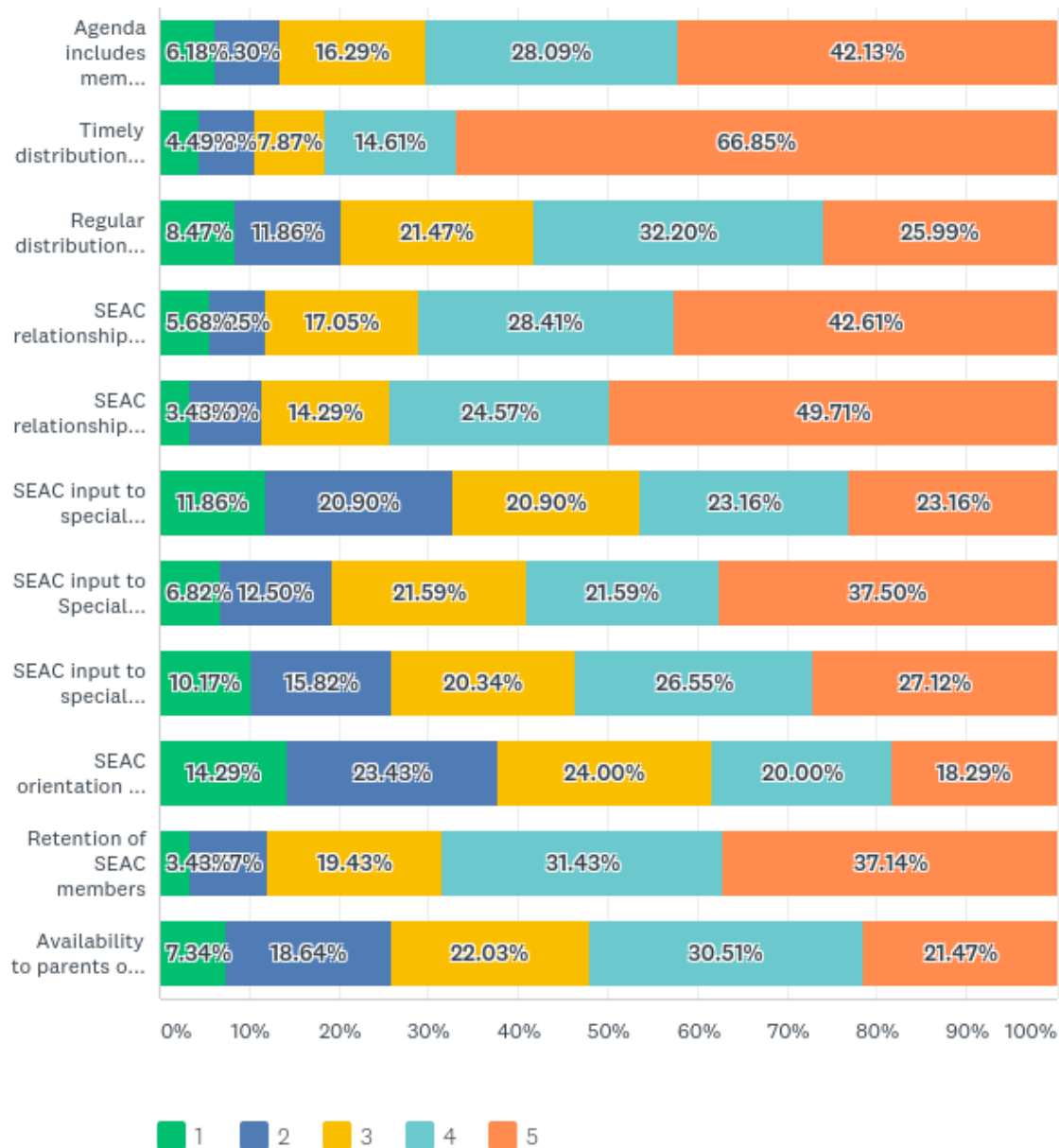
*“Only power to recommend”*

*“I am not sure we create change in policies or procedures, but we review P&P”*

## PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices

1. Board should have a process to include SEAC in review and development of policy as it relates to special education

**Q 28 – From the following list please rank each of the following aspects of your SEAC, from 1 least effective to 5 most effective.**



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Agenda includes member input	6.18% 11	7.30% 13	16.29% 29	28.09% 50	42.13% 75	178	3.93
Timely distribution of meeting materials	4.49% 8	6.18% 11	7.87% 14	14.61% 26	66.85% 119	178	4.33
Regular distribution of student statistics and data	8.47% 15	11.86% 21	21.47% 38	32.20% 57	25.99% 46	177	3.55
SEAC relationship with Trustees	5.68% 10	6.25% 11	17.05% 30	28.41% 50	42.61% 75	176	3.96
SEAC relationship with board staff	3.43% 6	8.00% 14	14.29% 25	24.57% 43	49.71% 87	175	4.09
SEAC input to special education budget process	11.86% 21	20.90% 37	20.90% 37	23.16% 41	23.16% 41	177	3.25
SEAC input to Special Education Plan	6.82% 12	12.50% 22	21.59% 38	21.59% 38	37.50% 66	176	3.70
SEAC input to special education programs and services	10.17% 18	15.82% 28	20.34% 36	26.55% 47	27.12% 48	177	3.45
SEAC orientation and training	14.29% 25	23.43% 41	24.00% 42	20.00% 35	18.29% 32	175	3.05
Retention of SEAC members	3.43% 6	8.57% 15	19.43% 34	31.43% 55	37.14% 65	175	3.90
Availability to parents of information about SEAC	7.34% 13	18.64% 33	22.03% 39	30.51% 54	21.47% 38	177	3.40

**Note: 1 is Least Effective – 5 is Most Effective**

## PAAC on SEAC Observations

Ranking by the weighted average response, or the combined percentage of “4” and “5” responses, results in the same ranking and very close to ranking by the percentage of “5” responses.

Ranking by weighted average suggests the most effective to least effective aspects of respondents’ SEACs in 2020 were as follows:

1. Timely distribution of meeting materials
2. SEAC relationship with board staff
3. SEAC relationship with Trustees
4. Agenda includes member input
5. Retention of SEAC members
6. SEAC input to Special Education Plan
7. Regular distribution of student statistics and data
8. SEAC input to special education programs and services
9. Availability to parents of information about SEAC
10. SEAC input to special education budget process
11. SEAC orientation and training

Of note is that #6, #8, #10 and #11 are all mandated SEAC Responsibilities

Two similar questions were asked in 2014 but not 2009. The 2014 questions invited respondents to select (only) the three most effective practices of their SEAC as well as (only) the top three aspects needing improvement in the functioning of your SEAC.

### **Sample of Comments from Respondents**

*“Things are improving at our SEAC. As long as the local association reps can remain united and support each other, and not allow the board to divide us by causing us to argue amongst each other, we can make progress.”*

*“My experience with this committee is it is more of an information meeting and less of a work meeting. We rarely help to shape the Special education program. We just are informed of how the board is doing things.”*

*“It would be nice to see meeting minutes online and I am not exactly sure where they post to meeting schedule (assume the main board events feed).”*

### **PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices**

1. As mandated by [Regulation 464/97](#), SEACs must adhere to the requirements of the Roles and Responsibilities.
2. SEACs should use the [PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook](#) and [Annual Calendar](#) for guidance.

## **Q 29 – Please share your ideas for enhancing the effectiveness of the SEAC voice in addressing the needs of students with special education needs in your board**

### **PAAC on SEAC Observations with Sample Comments from Respondents**

The areas of interest are identified by frequency of response:

#### **1. AUTHENTIC, TRANSPARENT COLLABORATION ON IMPORTANT ISSUES WITH FEEDBACK:**

SEAC reps seek more authentic, proactive collaboration on budget, supports, Ministry initiatives, program changes or reductions, stakeholder feedback in board-wide initiatives, changes and issues - with a feedback loop that recognizes the impact of the collaboration. Many noted staff reports on issues or programs that are implemented.

Some of the comments from members include:

*“Be authentically involved in the budget”*

*“It often feels like everything is decided and we are there to hear justifications”*

*“We should make recommendations to the Board and receive feedback.”*

#### **2. MEETING STRUCTURE AND CONTENT:**

Respondents would like to have greater input to agendas for SEAC meetings. Better organization of meetings with an annual plan and time for reflective input to budget and program issues. Using representative sub-committees to report to SEAC and the department was suggested.

Some of the comments and suggestions from members include:

*“More thoughtful approach to scheduling...being proactive...having enough lead time”*

*“involve SEAC sooner in decisions”*

*“we are pushing for better reporting ...IEP... suspension... graduation rates...”*

*“Agenda item...community concerns”*

*“Having work plans and sub-committees”*



3. SEAC MEMBER TRAINING – ROLES, RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, ADVOCACY:

SEAC members reported that orientation and ongoing training would assist in understanding and participating confidently in meetings, initiating discussions about emerging or ongoing issues and voting on motions. They seek direction in putting forward recommendations to the Boards and the Ministry.

Some of the comments and suggestions from members include:

*“Better onboarding”*

*“Confidence built in SEAC reps to have real conversations”*

*“Training is required so that all members understand their role”*

*“Effectively make change”*

4. BROADER ENGAGEMENT WITH THE COMMUNITY. ENHANCE AWARENESS OF SEAC:

SEAC members wish to enhance their opportunities to connect with the public and share perspectives with SEAC, enhancing parent, student and stakeholder voices.

Some of the comments and suggestions from members include:

*“Be included in stakeholder feedback”*

*“SEAC represented at Trustee ward forums”*

*“Host parent information sessions”*

5. BROADER STAKEHOLDER REPRESENTATION ON SEAC:

Respecting inclusivity, respondents both identified the need for more diverse voices while ensuring that advocates for students with special education needs form a majority on SEAC.

Some of the comments and suggestions from members include:

*“Be more open to ideas”*

*“More parent representatives needed”*

*“Ensure that all voices are heard”*

*“Including SEAC in School newsletters”*

6. MINISTRY TO TAKE LEAD – INSTRUCT WORK OF SEAC:

Ministry reviews of Special Education Plans should identify needs to Boards and SEACs. Clear expectations for the data and information to be shared, processes for collaborations on budgets and reviews, and consistent training would help

with the work of SEAC.

Some of the comments and suggestions from members include:

*“PPM to outline Ministry expectations regarding how SEACs operate”*

*”Ministry to define a standard set of reports...annually”*

#### 7. COMMUNICATION WITH TRUSTEES:

More direct communication with Trustees on issues and more Trustee attendance at SEAC were suggested.

Some of the comments and suggestions from members include:

*“The Board of Trustees is dismissive.... That makes it nearly impossible to have any impact.”*

*“We don’t get any feedback on the SEAC report or issues brought up”*

Themes identified by respondents are consistent with the results of the previous questions in survey

#### **PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices**

1. SEACs should refer regularly to [\*PAAC on SEAC Effective Practices Handbook\*](#)
2. Executive Summary at beginning of these contain PAAC on SEAC identified themes with the key findings and recommendations for effective practices for all SEACs

## **Anecdotal Information on Optional Data Questions**

### **Demographic Information**

#### **Q 30 Name of Your School Board (Optional)**

##### **PAAC on SEAC Observations**

- 77 respondents of 178 total respondents completed this question.
- They represented 30 of the 60 English School boards.

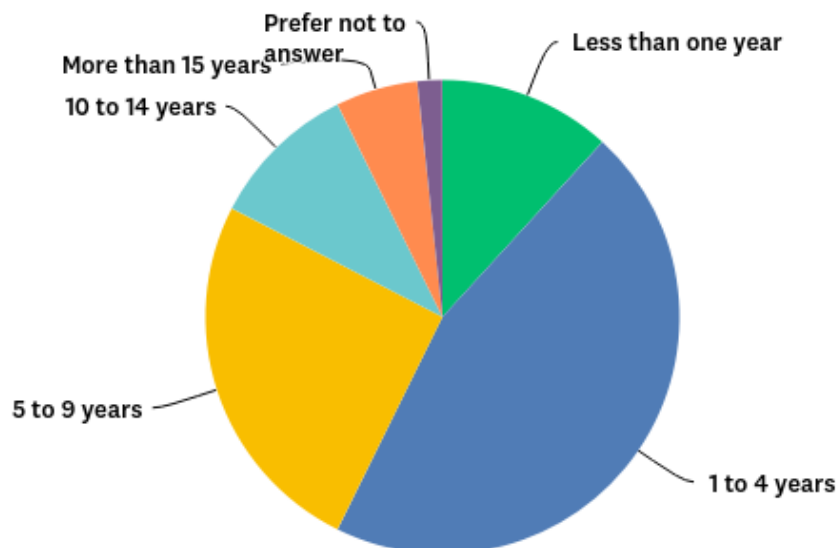
#### **Q 31 Name of the local association you represent (Optional)**

##### **PAAC on SEAC Observations**

- 36 respondents of 178 respondents answered this question representing 18 different local associations or community agencies.

## Q 32 Number of years on SEAC

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than one year	11.80%	21
1 to 4 years	45.51%	81
5 to 9 years	25.28%	45
10 to 14 years	10.11%	18
More than 15 years	5.62%	10
Prefer not to answer	1.69%	3
TOTAL		178



### PAAC on SEAC Observations

- More than 56% have less than 5 years experience
- Small percentage (7%) have more than 15 years
- 2014 & 2009 had similar results with approximately 51% having less than 5 years' experience, and 7% having more than 15 years

## 2021-2024 LDSB Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy

### Overview

Aligned with our Board Strategic Plan, the LDSB Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy (MHSUS) will promote mental health, reduce stigma, and clarify pathways to both Board and community-based supports for students.

### What will be included in the 2021-2024 MHSUS:

- Commitment statement
- Collaborative goals
- Actions to achieve goals
- Areas of focus

**Who are we collecting information from?** We are engaging a variety of stakeholders in multiple formats to enhance reach and offer multiple opportunities for participation. Stakeholders include:

- Students (Gr. 7-12)
- All families
- Staff (administrators, educators, EAs, ECEs, secretaries, custodians, support staff, Educational Services)
- Senior staff (including the Mental Health Lead and Superintendent of Learning for All)
- Trustees
- LDSB Mental Health Leadership Committee
- SMHO Implementation Coach
- Parent Involvement Committee
- Special Education Advisory Committee
- Community partners
- Federations
- Indigenous Education Advisory Council
- (TBC) a committee of racialized LDSB staff

### What are we collecting? How are we collecting it?

The two primary questions being asked of ALL stakeholders are:

1. **What are LDSB's strengths related to student mental health, substance use and well-being?**
2. **What are LDSB's needs related to student mental health, substance use and well-being?**

Students (grades 7-12) will be asked these same questions, plus two about who they turn to for support at school regarding mental health and substance use to elevate their voices within the data. We will also ask participants which school they attend or work in, so we can disaggregate results by school community for internal use.

**Confidentiality:** Responses for all stakeholders will be confidential. Data will only be presented in the aggregate (at both school and board levels) and no individual participants will be identified.

**When will we release results?** A results summary in the form of an infographic will be fed back to all participating stakeholders (including students). This will be offered in two parts, one in Spring 2021 and one in Fall 2021. Each individual school will also receive a summary of their overall results. Results will be suppressed for schools whose survey response rates are too low and therefore not generalizable. Any immediately actionable items from the data collection process will be fed back to appropriate administrators or members of the leadership team for follow up.

Last updated 01-08-2021