



Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - April 8, 2026

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance:

Trustees: Joe Meissner

Association Members: Jane Martin (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), John Newton (Autism Ontario), Shannon Taylor (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Roberta Thompson (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society)

Non-Association Members: Carmen Sutherland (Waterloo Region Family Network)

Board Staff in Attendance: Jodi Albrecht (Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being), Jennifer Crawford (Administrative Assistant), Stephen McCrae (System Administrator), Esther Wainaina (Human Rights Officer - Lead Accessibility Plan)

Guest: Lisa Weiler Haskins (VP Educational Assistants Association)

Regrets: Lilly Adam (YMCA of Three Rivers), Lisa Bonnell (Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children), Jennifer Checkley (Easter Seals), Samantha Estoesta (Trustee), Michelle Hughes (FASD/ONE Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise), Ami McIntosh (Autism Ontario), Jeff Senior (Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society), Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy)

Call to Order

Roberta Thompson called the meeting to order at 7p.m.

Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Steve McCrea

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Shannon Taylor, seconded by John Newton:

That the agenda of the April 8, 2026 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Carmen Sutherland, seconded by Roberta Thompson:

That the minutes of the March 11, 2026 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

Business Arising from the Minutes

- None

WRDSB Special Education & Student Well-Being Report - Jodi Albrecht

- Information
 - System Updates
 - Transitions
 - ACE team offered sessions for families
 - Providing information on transitions relating to grades 5-8 and into and through high school
 - Providing families greater transparency on placements and moves by sharing how decisions are made on where students are going to attend school
 - Planning for post graduation from secondary school
 - Early conversations in the first 3 years of secondary school to prepare for after graduation and when students turn 21
 - Community Connections Drop In Session held in January with community partners and families attending
 - Guided by: [PPM 156](#), and [PPM 140](#)

- Community Transition Fair for Parents, Caregivers, Families and Students, April 29, 2026, 5-8pm, Education Centre, 51 Ardelet Ave. Kitchener, No registration needed
- Family of Schools Meetings
 - Meetings Superintendents have with Principals and Vice Principals regarding school learning and improvement
 - January-March- looking at inclusive practices. In our schools, what does it look like, sound like, feel like?
 - Universal design for learning, differentiated instruction, and tiered supports in Mathematics and Literacy.
 - How do we ensure all of our students experience an inclusive learning environment?
- School Year Budget for 2026-2027
 - We do not have our core funding for next year, estimating what this will look like
 - Engaged in staffing for next year
 - Hoping to maintain our Special Education staff centrally
 - Support For Students funding has been confirmed which includes some allocation of EAs and Special Education Resource teachers
- Student Symposium coming this May
 - Secondary students, 7-8, ACE students attending
 - Focusing on students and their experiences
 - Learning for educators that are attending
- April 24, 2026 PD Day Events
 - Everyone will be working on school improvement planning
 - AI trainings: Ministry mandated training
 - Question/Feedback:

- What are they trying to do with this? How can educators use this effectively?
- EA/CYW PD
 - First Session: Building Cooperative Relationships
 - Second Session: Shelly Moore PD- focus on inclusive practices and understanding support vs people
- ACE teams will also have PD (EAs and teachers)
 - First Session: Erin's Law- presented by ACE and Safe Schools Consultants
 - Second Session: When does the student adapt and when do we modify the environment to ensure student success?
- Special Education Plan Updates
 - IPRC (Identification Placement Review Committee)
 - Students may be deemed exceptional in 5 areas
 - Categories: Behaviour, communication, intellectual, physical and multiple areas
 - Students do not need to be deemed exceptional to have an IEP. You don't need to have an IEP to get an accommodation
 - Looking to add information in the Special Education Plan for families to help them understand the IPRC process as well as IEPs and accommodations for supporting students with ADHD - this will be sent out for review prior to next meeting
 - Feedback/Questions:
 - Understand there are holes in the existing outlines
 - Students with medical issues also can have learning challenges

- Provide additional clarity for parents
 - Questioning the follow through on the accommodations listed on the IEP in the classroom
 - Could it be miscommunication? Or educators not understanding the accommodations?
 - Looking for accountability
 - How can parents be an active part of this process, have a voice?
 - Allowing for feedback from parents and students
 - Ensure we accommodate for students and be accountable, with or without an IEP or IPRC
- Discussion
 - Multi Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP)
 - Presentation by: Jodi Albrecht, Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being
 - Standard Areas: Customer Service, Physical Environment, Employment, Information and Communication, Transportation, Systemic;
 - For this coming plan, we are adding components from the Proposed K-12 Education Standards
 - Key areas:
 - Attitudes, Behaviour, Perceptions, Assumptions, Awareness and Training, Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction, Organizational Barriers, Social Realms, Physical and Architectural Barriers
 - We will return later to share the updated plan
 - Feedback:
 - Positive change in the right direction
 - Recognize there is a lot to this work in support of students

- Are teachers, EAs, CYWs, ECEs involved in this work?
 - The focus is on equipping all educators to meet the needs of our students
 - Ongoing work with accountability in mind
- Thanking, Jodi and Steve for welcoming this initiative
- Meeting with the Accommodation and Accessibility Committee to facilitate the work
- How do we meet the AODA - [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#)
 - Still ongoing work to incorporate the education standard in the AODA
 - Thanking, Esther for her work in this area

Chair Report for discussion/feedback - Roberta Thompson

- Welcome to our newest association member, John Newton, representing Autism Ontario
- [Toronto District SB Letter](#)
- [Durham Catholic DSB Letter](#)
- [WRDSB SEAC Letter of Support to Simcoe County DSB](#)
- [WRDSB SEAC Letter of Support to Durham DSB](#)
- [WRDSB SEAC Letter of Support to Toronto DSB](#)
 - Feedback:
 - School Boards are not receiving adequate funding to support students with complex needs
 - Outlining we need more funding for Special Education
 - Offering support for school board Trustees
 - Referencing the Human Rights Code

Trustee Report - Joe Meissner

- April Trustees Report
 - March Board Meeting and Committee Meetings updates

- Re-enrolled in OPSBA (Ontario Public School Boards' Association)
- Received a good report from our Board of Improvement and Equity Plan regarding wellness
- Approved a motion to send a letter to the Minister of Education on our Q2 evacuation numbers in our classrooms. First year we are collecting data on classroom evacuations. Would like to know if other Boards are collecting similar data, and asking for more resources for our schools to be able to reduce the number of evacuations happening
- Number of Trustee allocations for our Board
 - Keeping our Board at 11 Trustees
 - If elections happen in November the number of Trustees will stay the same
- New Student Trustees were elected for 2026-2027 school year and were introduced at the Board meeting
 - Gloria Anuraj from GPSS, representing the South Riding & Skyler Yoo from CHCI, representing the North Riding
 - Play an important role in Board and Committee meetings
 - Starting in August and will represent all students at the WRDSB

Round Table Association Reports

- Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region Family Network
 - On Friday, April 24, we will host our 11th Evening of Elegance event. The event will be held at St. George Banquet Hall at 665 King Street N, Waterloo from 7 - 10 pm. We are thrilled to share that we will be joined by special guests Bryan Delodder, founder of Ten Telescopes. Ten Telescopes creates 3D designs for affordable telescope viewing. Mark Pare will join us as Master of Ceremonies. We'd be delighted if you'd join us for an enchanting evening of dining and socializing!

- [Get your tickets here](#)
- Shannon Taylor, Epilepsy South Central
 - Epilepsy South Central hosting a games night, April 29, 2026
 - New teen support group for ages 14-18, meet virtually
 - [Refer to our website](#)
- Roberta Thompson, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society
 - Getting ready for our AGM
 - Had a great World Down Syndrome Day
 - WWDSS will be offering summer camps and a family picnic
 - Social and Music Groups are running
 - [Refer to our website](#)

Adjournment

Moved by Shannon Taylor, seconded by John Newton:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.