



Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - April 9, 2025

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, April 9, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance:

Trustees: Joe Meissner

Association Members: Nancy Lau (Autism Ontario), Ami McIntosh (Autism Ontario), Shannon Taylor (Epilepsy South Central Ontario), Jeff Senior & 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)

Guest: Ronald Dallan (Facilities - Manager of Capital Projects), Kara Kiefer Cox (Teacher - Blue Heron PS), Todd McDougal (Facilities - Project Coordinator), Chris Sagar (Facilities - Superintendent, Facilities Services), Esther Wainaina (Human Rights Officer - Lead Accessibility Plan), Oliver Wandelt (Facilities - Project Coordinator), Dale Wideman (Facilities - Project Coordinator)

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), Christine MacDonald (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County), Jane Martin (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy)

Call to Order

Shannon Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Jodi Albrecht

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Roberta Thompson, seconded by Carmen Sutherland:
That the agenda of the April 9, 2025 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Nancy Lau, seconded by Roberta Thompson:
That the minutes of the March 5, 2025 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

- Board Updates
 - Assistive Technology Sessions for Families and Caregivers of Primary/Junior Aged Students
 - Learn how to access OrbitNote PDF reader and Equatio math and science editor: April 28, 2025 from 12:00-12:30 pm or May 21, 2025 from 11:30-12:00 pm.
 - Explore tools in Equatio math and science editor: May 7, 2025 from 11:30-12:00 pm, or May 26, 2025 from 12:30-1:00 pm.
 - Explore digital tools available in OrbitNote: May 13, 2025 from 12:30-1:00 pm, or June 5, 2025 from 12:00-12:30 pm
 - Assistive Technology Sessions for Families and Caregivers of Intermediate/Secondary Aged Students
 - Explore digital manipulatives in Equatio: April 16, 2025 from 12:30-1:00 pm

- Explore digital tools available in OrbitNote: April 23, 2025 from 12:00-12:30 pm
- Psychology and Social Work Department Lunch and Learn Sessions
 - Using visual strategies to support kids at home: April 23, 2025 from 12:15-12:45 pm
 - What makes a good life? The components of well-being: April 30, 2025 from 12:15-12:45 pm
- Northlake Woods PS held their Spring Fling and invited ACE classrooms across the system.
- Budget update: We do not have Core funding allocated at this time. We are in the planning stages for next year. Hoping to maintain our current staffing levels.
- Elizabeth Ziegler PS had some challenges with their building. The school was closed on March 4, 2025. The transition started with virtual classrooms until we could move students to other sites. 3 ACE classes are now located at JW Gerth PS, and 1 enrichment class is now located at Brigadoon PS. Students will be staying at their new location for the next school year. We are making necessary adjustments to current classroom spaces.
- Letters for students to become potential SEAC student members discussed at the last meeting will be shared with schools.

Discussion/Feedback

- Facilities Presentation: ACE Classroom Standards, Presented by Ron Dallan (Manager of Capital Projects), Todd McDougal (Project Coordinator), Chris Sagar (Superintendent, Facilities Services), Oliver Wandelt (Project Coordinator), Dale Wideman (Project Coordinator)
 - Ace Classrooms
 - Updating design standards for ACE classrooms
 - Asking SEAC for feedback on classroom physical environments for future renovations/builds.

- Function & Occupancy, Access & Circulation, Work Surfaces & Storage, Finishes, Other Fixtures, Mechanical Requirements, Electrical Requirements, Plumbing Requirements.
 - Shared the WRDSB Accessibility Plan
 - Adding more elevators to schools.
 - Feedback: SEAC members are excited to see the focus on purpose based plans.
- Outdoor Playgrounds
 - New RFP process, CSA-Z614-20 Compliant
 - Utilizing accessible paved pathways
 - Universal design for accessibility
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder and/or Sensory Processing Disorders, Visual Impairments, Mobility Challenges, Hearing Impairments.
 - Parent Council are included in the process of choosing the best overall design.
 - Feedback: SEAC members would like to see more incorporated for Secondary School locations.
- Student Mental Health and Addictions Strategy feedback opportunity
Presented by Jodi Albrecht (Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being)
 - Follow up from the February SEAC meeting
 - Outlining Policy/Program Memorandum 169 - Every school board must have a 3 year Mental Health and Addiction Strategic Plan and a 1 year Action Plan.

Chair Report for discussion/feedback - Shannon Taylor

- Letter from Bluewater DSB
 - Outlining gaps in Special Education.
- Letter from Ottawa Catholic School Board

- All the SEAC chairs signed, and the final version of the letter has been sent.
- Letter from Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
 - Letter to SEAC chair, encouraging local groups to advocate by asking questions during budget and planning processes for next year's funding allocations.
 - Has a video link to a process of how SEAC can bring about a motion in relation to your school board and trustees. Our SEAC members are happy with the way our meetings are conducted. No further discussion needed.

Trustee Report - Joe Meissner

- Consultation of the Strategic Plan. Assessments and adjustments will be taking place.
- Trustee Governance Model Bill 198 was discussed, involving changes to the governing structure during Board Meetings.
- Elizabeth Ziegler PS updates: Staff were involved in the reorganization. Managed to put a plan in place in a short time frame.
- Math Achievement Action Plan presentation to Trustees. The math team updated that the Ministry was at our school Board recently. Looked at the emotional and instructional side of math. The math team is developing PD sessions for functional numeracy skills for kindergarten and ACE students for math facilitators, congregated teachers and itinerant Spec. Ed teachers. Budget numbers will be coming soon for next year. The math team has indicated there are not enough staff for all of the professional development requests received this year and are hoping for the money to continue on the same scale or allow for an increase from this current year.

Round Table Association Reports

- Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region Family Network
 - The Transition to High School workshop in partnership with Waterloo Region District School Board and the Waterloo

Catholic District School Board was well attended and appreciated.

- We are excited for our 10th Evening of Elegance Fundraiser! We are expecting over 100 guests - unfortunately tickets are no longer available.
- Nancy Lau, Autism Ontario
 - The excitement continues throughout the month! To find out more, and how to participate, visit: celebratethespectrum.com
 - Provincial - Pathways to Special Education Support: Meet and Greet for Families. Connect with the Autism Ontario team and volunteer SEAC representatives. April 29, 2025, 7:00-8:30 pm.
 - Celebrate the Spectrum School Giving Challenge
 - Your school could win a profile in Autism Ontario's Autism Matters magazine and widespread recognition on our social media! From April 1st to 30th, participating schools will compete for a \$500 pizza lunch prize for the Top Fundraising School of 2025 and be entered in a random draw for a \$200 Dollarama gift card!
 - Join the challenge by registering your school and rally your students around this limited-time, Ontario-wide competition, all for a good cause!
- Roberta Thompson, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society
 - Spring Mini-Conference with a focus on Behaviour and Employment Fair and Annual General Meeting: May 3, 2025, 9:30-2:15 pm, RIM Park, Waterloo
 - Employment Skills Workshops this May, offered in conjunction with KWhabilitation.
 - Summer School camp: August 11-15, 2025
 - WWDSS Picnic: June 22, 2025, 3:00-7:00 pm.

Date of Next Meeting

The next SEAC meeting date is May 14, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Moved by Shannon Taylor, seconded by Carmen Sutherland:
That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.