



Special Education Advisory Committee

Minutes - June 11, 2025

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was held virtually on Wednesday, June 11, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance:

Association Members: Nancy Lau (Autism Ontario), Christine MacDonald (Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County), 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: Erin Bell (System Administrator, Elementary, JK-8/Early Years Learning Coordinator), Ines Bijl (Consultant, School Liaison, Structured Literacy and Reading Interventions), Kimberly Templeton (Acadience Consultant JK-8), 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), Jane Martin (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), Ami McIntosh (Autism Ontario), Joe Meissner (Trustee), Kathy Waybrant (Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy), Esther Wainaina (Human Rights Officer - Lead Accessibility Plan)

Call to Order

Shannon Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Welcome & Territorial Acknowledgement - Jodi Albrecht

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Carmen Sutherland, seconded by Nancy Lau:

That the agenda of the June 11, 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 May 14, 2025 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, be approved.

- Carried -

Business Arising from the Minutes

- Would like to have more comments recorded from SEAC members in the minutes. Would like to have past comments to reflect back on for future discussion.

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

- Board Updates
 - [RARC: Parent Workshop Series](#), August 12-13, 2025: 9:00-12:30 pm
 - Free virtual series
 - This program is for parents and guardians of students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD in grade 7 or 8 in Ontario
 - Support as they transition from elementary to post-secondary school
 - [RelATe: Assistive Technology Tools for Summer](#), No registration is required
 - Library Learning Commons: Learn about the reading materials in the library learning commons and ways to make them accessible to our child at home
 - Tuesday, June 17: 12:30-1:00 pm

- Thursday, June 19: 12:00-12:30 pm
 - Free Apps for Use on Smartphone or Tablet: Learn about 3 free apps that can help your child with literacy and math at home
 - Monday, June 23: 12:30-1:00 pm
 - Wednesday, June 25: 11:30-12:00 pm
 - Budget Update:
 - Received our next year’s budget at the end of May
 - We are currently making plans for next year
 - Maintaining status quo and have some capacity to increase a little in Special Education
- Discussion
 - [WRDSB Multi-Year Structured Literacy Plan](#), Presented by: Erin Bell (System Administrator, Elementary, JK-8/Early Years Learning Coordinator), Ines Bijl (Consultant, School Liaison, Structured Literacy and Reading Interventions), Kimberly Templeton (Acadience Consultant JK-8)
 - WRDSB Vision for Learning, Foundational document
 - 5 year plan
 - Multi-Tiered System of Support
 - Individual, Small group, Whole class settings
 - Classroom Teacher
 - Early Reading Resource Teachers 6-8 weeks of support (Co-planning, Co-assessing, Co-Teaching)
 - Updates from [Acadience Universal Screener presentation](#): October, 2024; Ines Bijl (Special Education Consultant)
 - Revised Report Card Fields: Recording and reporting requirements
 - ERS completed Check Boxes:
 - Yes-checked if completed
 - No-absent or not available for the mandate

- NA-JK and grades 3+ are not screened
- Kindergarten Report Cards now have the benchmark met check boxes
- June report card will have this checked if the student in grades SK-2 did meet the benchmark in the first reporting period
- Potential Exemptions were questioned:
 - Ministry has said; No exemptions
 - There is a need for bias free assessment practices
 - Not up to the educators to decide that a student can or cannot do the tasks on the assessment
 - All students should have the opportunity to engage
- Oral Reading Fluency Assessments for Grades 3-9
- PPM 155 requires evidence based diagnostics will be assessed once per year
 - All educators were trained in October 2024
 - Junior lead in every school
 - Intermediate lead in all K-8 + 7-8 schools
 - Reading Support Teachers (highschool)
 - Literacy Intervention Project (gr. 6, 7+8)
 - Rewards Pilot
 - Supported 16 schools
 - Closed gaps for students using a tier 3 intervention
 - Older students who have persistent gaps in their foundational skills

Feedback

- Strengthens the hope that all learners/students are capable and allowing them to be a part of something
- Thank you for advocating and building an awesome path forward
- Roberta shared a book “I Can” that her son enjoys
- Your work focuses on the challenge to get the answers that were needed
- Appreciated the update on the past presentation and for asking SEAC for feedback on complex learners and showcasing the work you are doing across the system for our students
- Wow, thank you, In awe of the work, comes from from the heart
- Thank you for listening and taking things into consideration for putting thought into these tools to help those that are not able to verbally participate be a part of the process
- Taking away the literary optimism
- Important to share this presentation with families so they know what is being done. Share the video of learner’s outcomes of successes
- Would like more information on plans for high school aged learners
 - How to help those students in higher grades with their learning gaps
 - Spec Ed parents worry about their students not being able to read, technology available during school years but what happens when they graduate from this system
 - SEAC would like a future presentation on this age group

Chair Report for discussion/feedback - Shannon Taylor

- Policy Review Follow Up

- SEAC can add their feedback to the Google forms provided in the agenda by June 30, 2025
 - Choose the right policy to provide feedback on the correct form
 - Jennifer will also submit our comments collected
- Special Education Transportation Discussion: Jane Martin (Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy)
 - Some staff have raised concerns about medically fragile kids experiencing high temperatures in the afternoon bus rides. The routes can be up to 1 hour in length and can cause issues for students with respiratory issues may have adverse effects especially during days with poor air quality
 - Feedback:
 - Buses can be hot and have poor air quality at this time of the year. Is it possible to prioritize and strategically plan routes to reduce time on the bus and to see if air conditioning can be provided in vehicles for medically fragile students?
 - A SEAC member did not get a transportation update when their child's bus route was changed and lengthened. Caused undue stress not being aware of the change to the drop off time
 - Bus drivers are following the routes set out by dispatch, can they be reorganized so there are not so many inconsistencies
 - Multiple schools for student pick ups and realize the difficulty involved in student transportation
 - Concerns with communication delays in notifying parents about bus delays
 - Before tonight's meeting, Jodi forwarded the concerns raised to Transportation so they can rectify the situation.
- New Chair needed for 2025-2026 SEAC meetings: Consider over the summer becoming Chair and selection/finalization will take place at the September meeting
- [SEAC Meeting Dates 2025-2026](#)

- Thank you to all the members on SEAC for their work on the committee this past year

Trustee Report - Samantha Estoesta and Joe Meissner

- [June Trustees Report](#)

Round Table Association Reports

- Christine MacDonald, Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County
 - [Roy Cooper Memorial Scholarship](#) Available
 - Eligibility: Ontario high school student with a documented Learning Disability as a primary diagnosis, graduating in 2025, entering a bachelor's program in engineering or physical sciences
 - Deadline to apply: Friday, June 27, 2025 at 4:00pm
 - Submit applications to: Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County
 - Email: info@ldawc.ca
 - For paper copies: Attention: Marciane Any, Executive Director: P.O. Box 233, 17A–218 Silvercreek Pkwy N, Guelph, ON N1H 8E8
- Shannon Taylor, Epilepsy South Central Ontario
 - AERO: a web-based digital repository operated by the Ministry of Education in partnership with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development. Provide large font books or text converted to Braille. Assists students with perceptual disabilities from kindergarten to post doctorate.
 - Only school resource staff or a teacher can request an account on AERO.
- Nancy Lau, Autism Ontario
 - [Autism Ontario June Updates](#)

- David Conforti Reach for the Stars Award: Recognize the importance of volunteerism with community impact among other people with autism, Applications accepted until June 30, 2025
- Autism Ontario Presents: Exploring Autism event, Understanding Special Education: Workshop for Caregivers of Autistic Learners, New Signature Series webinars, New videos on the website
- Carmen Sutherland, Waterloo Region Family Network
 - New dates for Kaleidoscope Kids. [Please view flyer](#)
 - June 14, from 3-4pm at Oak Creek EarlyON
 - June 19, from 3-4pm at Oak Creek EarlyON
 - August 16, from 3-4pm at Oak Creek EarlyON
 - Registration is now required through EarlyON
 - WRFN Camp Day will be in September, stay tuned for more details
- Roberta Thompson, Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society
 - Up Side Down Charity GOLF Tournament: June 16, 2025
 - WWDSS Family Picnic for members only: June 22, 2025
 - WWDSS Summer School Camp: August 11-15, 2025
 - Summer [Programs and Events](#) at the Cambridge Library
 - Reading Buddies through the Cambridge Library in the summer June 30-August 17.
 - Multi-Sensory room at the Cambridge library: Clemens Mill location.

Adjournment

Moved by Roberta Thompson, seconded by Carmen Sutherland:

That the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned.

- Carried -

The meeting adjourned at 8:57p.m.