



GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at the Administration Building, 451 Park Street West, Windsor, ON.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Tim McCarthy, Autism Ontario
Kim McKinley, Trustee
Mandy Hayes, Community Living Association
Mary-Ann Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association Windsor-Essex County
Chelsey Lackovic, Windsor Council of Home and School Association
Cherly Lovell, Trustee

BOARD PERSONNEL IN ATTENDANCE

Chris Mills, Superintendent of Schools/Special Education Programs and Services
Vicki Houston, Director of Education
Laura Bates, Supervising Principal of Special Education
Marc Crundwell, Supervisor of Psychological and Speech Language Services
Jodi Burgon, OPC Elementary
Bianca Rota, Education Coordinator
Jen Redmile, Specialist Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired

REGRETS

Theresa Williams, OPC Secondary
Joanna Conrad, Windsor-Essex Down Syndrome Association
Sarah Yang, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise

RECORDER

Melissa Beaton

1. Call to Order
K. McKinley called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm.
2. Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands and Water
K. McKinley read the approved GECDSB Land Acknowledgement
Regrets – Theresa Williams, Joanna Conrad, Sarah Yang
3. Approval of Agenda
Moved by: C. Lakovic
Seconded by: C. Lovell
That SEAC approve the Agenda for February 11, 2026.
4. Declaration of conflict of interest
None
5. Approval of Minutes
Moved by: T. McCarthy
Seconded by: M. Fuduric

The motion was carried.

That SEAC approved the Minutes of January 14, 2026.

The motion was carried.

6. Business Arising as a Result of the Minutes

There was no new business as a result of the minutes.

7. Special Education Presentation

- Blind/Low Vision Services

This presentation on Vision Services was presented by Jen Redmile, who provided an overview of the role of Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired within GECDSB. The team consists of six OCT-certified educators with specialized training in blindness, low vision, and braille, supporting students from early years through secondary school. Students served include those with low vision, legal blindness, light or no light perception, as well as students with multiple exceptionalities involving vision. Depending on need, students may receive consultation, monitoring, or aligned support.

The presentation highlighted the importance of early vision screening, noting that OHIP covers children's eye exams annually up to age 19, and programs such as Eye See, Eye Learn can assist families. These Specialist Teachers collaborate with families, eye care professionals, classroom staff, and community partners to create accessible learning environments. Their responsibilities include IEP development, accessible materials, direct instruction in braille and assistive technology, environmental assessments for safety and access, and guiding students in skills covered within the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC), this includes mobility, independent living, social skills, recreation, technology, sensory efficiency, and self-advocacy.

The presentation highlighted the importance of direct, intentional instruction for students with visual impairments, recognizing that while sighted learners often absorb information incidentally, students with blindness or low vision require structured opportunities to build independence, safety, and success in school and life.

- Specialized Services for Supporting Students Entry into Kindergarten and Beyond Presented by B. Rota. Last year, our Transition Navigators hosted a night for kindergarten registration. While that session shared valuable information, some of the feedback received was that many families had to wait through content not relevant to their needs, and many requested recordings. This year, the goal was to make the information more accessible, a video series was created.

The GECDSB videos include:

- Blind/Low Vision Supports
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Supports
- Speech and Language Pathologists
- Psychologists
- Social Work
- Special Education Coordinators
- Open Minds Team

Community Partner videos:

- Children First
- School-Based Rehabilitation Services: Occupational Therapists
- John McGivney Children's Centre School-Based Rehabilitation Services: Physiotherapists

You can find the videos at <https://www.publicboard.ca/en/programs-and-learning/special-education-student-services-department-informational-videos.aspx>

8. Special Education Updates

- Update for Supports on Tier 3 Students
C. Mills shared an overview of student feedback during recent visits with Tier 3 students transitioning from RISE classrooms into full-day homeroom settings. Students widely reported positive social experiences, including stronger sense of belonging, friendships, and increased confidence associated with spending the full day with their peers. Students highlighted subjects of gym, science, and math as areas of success, often due to supportive teaching, hands-on learning and clear instructional structures. They also shared the strategies that best support their learning, including scaffolded instruction, small-group learning, assistive technology, and multisensory approaches. Students also identified several ongoing challenges. Some continue to struggle with the faster pace, noise level and reduced individualized support. Subjects like reading, history, and art were described as difficult. Despite the challenges, schools report that most former RISE students are progressing well academically and socially, with improving attendance and stable behaviour. Continued next steps include strengthening self-advocacy skills, reinforcing understanding of IEP goals and accommodations, maintaining caring adult connections, enhancing use of assistive technology, and supporting staff learning in UDL and differentiated instruction.
- Professional Development Updates
L. Bates shared the professional development planned for February 2026. All staff both elementary and secondary will participate in a session with Holland Bloorview and the Rick Hansen Foundation focused on shifting from ableism to allyship. A focus on moving from ableism to allyship in school communities., presuming competence for all students, and learning from individuals with lived experience. Secondary Education Support Staff will join Holland Bloorview for a panel conversation with youth with lived experience of disability share their perspectives.
Secondary LSTs will participate in a full day of learning where we will share information about partnerships with community partners (CICE), as well as plan together for our work the Barrier Grant Transition projects (RARC).
- Special Education events/dates
 - White Cane Week February 1–7, 2026
 - Kindergarten Open House – February 19, 2026

9. Items for Future Agendas
No items

10. Association Reports

- M. Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association Windsor-Essex County – our Pasta Fundraiser was very successful.
- T. McCarty, Autism Ontario – We have clothing and other items available to purchase if interested to celebrate World Autism Day, April 2, 2026. These include hoodies, hats, toques, canvas bags, tees and more. Available for purchase on the Autism Ontario website. We will be hosting a Pasta Dinner evening on Friday, April 17th, 2026 at the Fogolar Furlan Club. Adults are \$25 and children (age 4-12) \$20. Doors open at 5:00 pm. Tickets can be purchased through the Windsor office, on Drouillard Rd.
Join us at Tecumseh Chess Lessons for beginner- friendly chess lessons. The perfect way for kids and learners of all ages to discover the fun and challenge of chess, no matter their starting skill level. Ages 9 and up. Location: Brady's Fitness on Amy Croft in Tecumseh and cost is \$3.00. Contact Livia at 416-246-9592 ext. 331 if interested.
More information regarding the 'Celebrate the Spectrum' campaign coming soon.

11. Distribution

None

12. Adjournment

Chairperson McKinley adjourned the meeting at 2:18 pm.



NEXT MEETING, March 11, 2026

Board Meeting Minutes available on [GECDSB website](#).

Vicki Houston, Director of Education

Chris Mills, Administrative Liaison

Kim McKinley, SEAC Chairperson

[Ministry SEAC website](#)