



## GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, June 11, 2025, at the Administration Building, 451 Park Street W., Windsor, ON.

### MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Tim McCarthy, Autism Ontario

Kim McKinley, Trustee

Chelsey Lackovic, Windsor Council of Home and School Association

Mary-Ann Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association Windsor-Essex County

Martha Vukov, Community Living Essex County

Sarah Yang, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise

Joanna Conrad, Windsor-Essex Down Syndrome Association

### BOARD PERSONNEL IN ATTENDANCE

Chris Mills, Superintendent of Schools/Special Education Program and Services

Laura Bates, Supervising Principal of Special Education

Vicki Houston, Director of Education

Shelley Armstrong, Superintendent of Business

Marc Crundwell, Supervisor of Psychological and Speech Language Services

Shawn Maheux, Manager of Financial Services

### REGRETS

Teresa Williams, OPC Secondary Representative

Michelle Lowes, OPC Elementary Representative

### RECORDER

Melissa Beaton

#### 1. Call to Order

Chairperson McCarthy called the meeting to order at 1:02pm

#### 2. Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands and Water

K. McKinley read the approved GECDSD Land Acknowledgement.

#### 3. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: M. Fuduric

Seconded by: C. Lackovic

That SEAC approve the Agenda for June 11, 2025.

The motion was carried.

4. Approval of Minutes

Moved by: C. Lackovic

Seconded by: S. Yang

That SEAC approve the Minutes of May, 15, 2025.

The motion was carried.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

5. Business Arising as a Result of the Minutes

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

6. Special Education Presentation

- 2025-2026 Special Education Budget

Superintendent Armstrong and S. Maheux presented the 2025-26 draft Special Education Budget, highlighting a total projected funding of \$75.28 million. The majority of this funding comes from the Special Education Fund (SEF), which includes allocations for per-pupil support, differentiated needs, complex supports, and specialized equipment. Notable increases were seen in the Per Pupil and Differentiated Needs Allocations, largely due to updated benchmarks and census data. However, the Specialized Equipment Allocation saw a slight decrease due to lower enrolment.

The presentation also outlined significant changes, including the elimination of Jordan's Principle funding, which previously supported 26 Student Support Worker positions. Special Education budget is projected to run a deficit of \$8.75 million, down from the previous year. This shortfall reflects a continued gap between funding and the actual cost of delivering comprehensive special education services.

New developments for 2025-26 include the modernization of Education and Community Partnership Programs (ECPP) funding, updates to the Special Education Statistical Prediction Model using 2021 census data, and an interim approach to Special Incidence Portion (SIP) funding. The board continues to prioritize staffing and support for students with complex needs, while navigating fiscal constraints and evolving provincial funding models.

- ODA Plan 2025-2026

Superintendent Armstrong presented the 2025-2026 Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA). This plan outlines the ongoing efforts to identify, remove and prevent barriers for individuals with disabilities. The plan aligns with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and includes updates in key areas such as information and communication, employment, transportation, customer service, and the built environment. Key initiatives include upgrading building accessibility features (e.g. automatic doors, accessible washrooms), providing accommodations for visually impaired students and staff, and continuing renovations at various schools to improve barrier-free access.

Renovations completed in 2024-25 included barrier-free washroom installations and door modifications at several schools. Planned projects for 2025-26 include further washroom upgrades, automatic door installations, and ramp construction.

## 7. Special Education Updates

- Professional Development Updates

L. Bates shared upcoming professional development. Education Support staff participated in a virtual workshop on Ableism, featuring presenters from Holland Bloorview and the Rick Hansen Foundation. This interactive session, emphasized the importance of reflecting inclusive practices within schools. Feedback was positive, with 90% of participants reporting they learned new information, 98% indicating they could apply the content with students and 90% recommending the session to colleagues. Notably, Chantal from the Rick Hansen Foundation shared that staff were pleased with the sessions' relevance and impact. Looking ahead, the final PA Day of the year will feature a presentation from Dr. Novak on Education Practice on UDL for both elementary and secondary educators.

- Special Education Plan Review

Standard 1 – The Board's Consultation Process

Standard 2 – The Board's General Model for Special Education

Standard 4 – Early Identification and Procedures and Intervention Strategies

Standard 6 – Educational and Other Assessments

Standard 8 – Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities

Standard 9 – Special Education Placements Provided by the Board

Standard 10 – Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Transition Planning

Standard 12 – Special Education Staff

Standard 13 – Staff Development

Section D – Coordination of Services with Other Ministries

Section E – Submission and Availability of the Plan

Appendix 1 – The IEP Template

Appendix 2 – Parent Guide to the IEP

Appendix 3 – Individual Education Plan (IEP) Consultation Form

Appendix 4 – Parent Guide to the IPRC

Appendix 5 – ODA 2025-2026 Plan

Appendix 6 – Reaching Individual Success and Excellence (RISE) – Partially-Integrated Classroom Program Review

Appendix 7 – Changes to Partially Integrated Reaching Individuals Success and Excellence (RISE) Program at the Greater Essex County District School Board

Appendix 8 – Glossary

Standards, Sections and Appendices were shared with the committee feedback/revisions were collected to apply to the 2025-2026 plan.

- Update on Restructuring Supports for Special Education

Superintendent Mills provided an update on transition planning and professional development initiatives related to the RISE program and the broader student supports. He highlighted the inclusion of a new "Snapshot of Me" tool, shared with administrators and RISE teachers, to help students communicate their strengths and needs for the

upcoming year. A variety of transition activities are planned, including peer buddy programs, memory books, goal setting, and nutrition break visits. A professional development session is planned for early September for Learning Support Teachers. A monitoring plan is being developed to support homeroom teachers and child and youth workers, modeled after successful practices in secondary schools. Updates to GAINS, STEPS, and Hub resources are underway. Feedback from students and staff will be gathered throughout the year to guide ongoing improvements.

#### 8. Items for Future Agendas

- Chairperson McCarthy suggested including upcoming dates and events on future agendas to help members stay informed. There was also discussion about incorporating regular reports from the Superintendent, Supervising Principal, Psychological Services and Speech-Language Pathology, as well as a possible Director's Report. It was also recommended future presentations highlighting the roles of staff who work directly with students. It was suggested that a standing item for Conflict of Interest be added. Members were encouraged to reach out to the Chairperson, Vice-Chair and Superintendent with specific suggestions to help map out future agenda items. Director Houston expressed her appreciation to all members for their ongoing commitment and participation during the workday.

#### 9. Association Reports

- M. Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association Windsor-Essex County – Registration continues for our summer programs, which include Barton Reading and Spelling Program and Sky High Enrichment Camp. Subsidies are available.
- J. Conrad, Windsor-Essex Down Syndrome Association – Last month we hosted a successful parent night that included a riverboat cruise, it was a fun event for all who attended. Planning is underway for an upcoming event in October, and details will be shared with SEAC. Information was shared about the I Can Bike program, and there is hope to resume the Reading Tutor Program in September. The organization continues to operate without a director at this time.
- S. Yang, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise – Our last Caregiver Support Group is being held on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025, with a focus on planning our Awareness Day, which is September 9<sup>th</sup>. We will share more details as they become available.
- T. McCarthy, Autism Ontario – We are currently looking for a director.

#### 10. Distribution

There was no distribution.

#### 11. Adjournment

Chairperson McCarthy adjourned the meeting at 2:37 p.m.



NEXT MEETING, September 10, 2025

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

Vicki Houston, Director of Education

Chris Mills, Administrative Liaison

[Ministry SEAC website](#)