



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

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

### **MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Tim McCarthy, Autism Ontario  
Chelsey Lackovic, Windsor Council of Home and School Association  
Kim McKinley, Trustee  
Chandrika Abhang, Trustee  
Sarah Yang, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise  
Mary-Ann Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association Windsor-Essex County

### **BOARD PERSONNEL IN ATTENDANCE**

Chris Mills, Superintendent of Schools/Special Education Programs and Services  
Laura Bates, Supervising Principal of Special Education  
Marc Crundwell, Supervisor of Psychological and Speech Language Services  
Shelley Armstrong, Superintendent of Business, Treasurer and Facility Services  
Shawn Maheux, Manager of Financial Services

### **REGRETS**

Mandy Hayes, Community Living Association  
Jodi Burgon, OPC Elementary  
Theresa Williams, OPC Secondary

1. Call to Order  
Chairperson McKinley called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm.
2. Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands and Water  
Chairperson McKinley read the approved GECDSD Land Acknowledgement.
3. Approval of Agenda  
Moved by: M. Fuduric  
Seconded by: T. McCarthy  
That SEAC approve the Agenda for March 11, 2026. The motion was carried.
4. Declaration of conflict of interest  
None
5. Approval of Minutes  
Moved by: C. Lackovic  
Seconded by: S. Yang  
Thank SEAC approved the Minutes of February 11, 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

- Budget Consultation

Superintendent Armstrong and Shawn Maheux presented an overview of the 2026-27 budget development process and legislative requirements. The Board must submit a balanced budget by June 30<sup>th</sup> in accordance with the Education Act, with the fiscal year running from September 1 to August 31. Budget planning is an ongoing cycle that includes enrolment forecasting, risk analysis, public and committee consultations, trustee approval, and regular financial reporting, all aligned with the Board's strategic priorities and a focus on student achievement and well-being.

Special Education funding is provided through several enveloped allocations and primarily supports staffing, specialized services and equipment for students with special education needs. While there is some flexibility to school boards, some funding is protected, or "enveloped", the Board acknowledged that it is not sufficient to fully address the growing complexity and volume of student needs.

An overview of the Board's financial position identified a \$3.6 million in-year deficit for 2025-26, which the Ministry has classified as structural. Key pressures include special education costs, staffing, transportation, benefit costs, and unfunded positions. As a result, the Board is operating under a Multi-Year Financial Recovery Plan that requires a balanced budget by 2026-27. The Board highlighted ongoing risks such as enrolment declines, inflation, and collective agreement costs, and emphasized the importance of stakeholder input, including feedback from SEAC, as part of the budget consultation process.

## 8. Special Education Updates

- Strategic Planning Session with Usha James

U. James joined the Special Education Advisory Committee via Teams.

The Greater Essex County District School Board, with the assistance of the Critical Thinking Consortium, is collecting student, staff, family and community guidance and feedback to inform strategic planning. In this session, SEAC members had the opportunity to think together about how the students we serve experience school and what is helpful and harmful for their learning.

- Professional Development Updates

L. Bates will defer to April to give a more fulsome professional development update. February PD was well received. The Special Education Department met as a team at Tecumseh Vista Academy, where they engaged in learning together on Ableism to Allyship with Rick Hansen and Holland Bloorview.

- Special Education events/dates

- Level Up! Know Your Brain. Own Your Game – April 28, 2026

## 9. Items for Future Agendas

No items.

## 10. Association Reports

- M. Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association Windsor-Essex County – Spring programs are starting on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026, visit [ldawe.ca](http://ldawe.ca) for more information.
- T. McCarthy, Autism Ontario – April 2<sup>nd</sup> is World Autism Day.

## 11. Distribution

- Durham District School Board – Provincial Proposal to Replace Trustees with Provincially Appointed Supervisors

## 12. Adjournment

Chairperson McKinley adjourned the meeting at 2:56 pm.



NEXT MEETING, April 8, 2026

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

Vicki Houston, Director of Education

Chris Mills, Administrative Liaison

Kim McKinley, SEAC Chairperson

[Ministry SEAC website](#)