



GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, October 8, 2025, at the Administration Building, 451 Park Street W., Windsor, ON.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Kim McKinley, Trustee

Nancy Armstrong, Trustee

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

Chelsey Lakovic, Windsor Council of Home and School Association

Amanda Den Hartogh, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise

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

Jodi Burgon, OPC Elementary Representative

Theresa Williams, OPC Secondary Representative

Marc Crundwell, Supervisor of Psychological and Speech Language Services

Bianca Rota, Education Coordinator

REGRETS

Tim McCarthy, Autism Ontario

Martha Vukov, Community Living Essex County

ABSENT

Joanna Conrad, Windsor-Essex Down Syndrome Association

1. Call to Order
Vice Chairperson McKinley called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm.
2. Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands and Water
K. McKinley read the approved GEEDSB Land Acknowledgement.
3. Approval of Agenda
Moved by: M. Fuduric
Seconded by: N. Armstrong
That SEAC approve the Agenda for October 8, 2025.

The motion was carried

4. Declaration of conflict of interest

None noted.

5. Approval of Minutes

Moved by: M. Fuduric

Seconded by: C. Lackovic

That SEAC approve the minutes of September 10, 2025.

The motion was carried

6. Business Arising as a Result of the Minutes

- SEAC Handbook feedback was presented to the committee. This item will be included on the November Agenda for approval.

7. Special Education Presentation

- Removing Barriers Grants – APEX presented by B. Rota

The APEX grant, in partnership with the University of Windsor and GECDSB's STEPS program, promotes inclusive physical activity and leadership development among students with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities. Piloted at Riverside Secondary, W.F. Herman Secondary, and Essex District High Schools, the program pairs leadership students with STEPS peers to engage in adapted fitness and sport-based activities. Through one-on-one mentorship, students build empathy, confidence, and a stronger sense of community.

The program has shown positive impacts, including increased independence and social connection for STEPS students, and enhanced leadership and teamwork skills for their mentors. Future goals include expanding the initiative across all GECDSB secondary schools, strengthening community partnerships, and embedding inclusive fitness practices into broader educational and recreational settings.

- Update for Supports on Tier 3 Students presented by C. Mills

C. Mills provided an update on Tier 3 student supports, highlighting initiatives such as "The First 10 Days, The Full 10 Months," which focuses on creating welcoming school climates and building psychological safety. Monthly resource bundles are shared with staff to promote relationship-building, aligned with The Third Path framework. These include strategies for classroom and school-wide engagement, caregiver communication, and educator reflection. Additionally, a series of Learning Support Teacher (LST) workshops were held throughout September to support literacy, math, and SEA training. The presentation also reviewed SEAC's mandate and advisory role under Ontario's Education Act. SEAC members are tasked with providing informed recommendations to improve special education services, emphasizing inclusivity and equitable access. Their responsibilities include participating in the annual Special Education Plan review, budget oversight, and maintaining communication with the Board through meeting minutes and trustee updates. Recommendations are submitted by majority vote and supported by formal reports.

Finally, the presentation reinforced expectations for SEAC member conduct and engagement. Members are to represent all exceptional pupils, maintain preparedness, communicate with local associations, and adhere to meeting protocols. These standards ensure that SEAC functions effectively as a collaborative and strategic advisory body within the Greater Essex County District School Board.

- Review Personal goals for sitting on the Special Education Advisory Committee
A form was shared with committee members to support engagement and goal setting. Members were invited to respond to the following questions:
 - What inspired you to join SEAC?
 - What are your personal goals for your time on the committee?
 - How do you hope to support students with special education needs and their families?
 - What strengths or experiences do you bring to SEAC?
 - Is there anything specific you'd like to learn or develop as a SEAC member?
- Review the goals of our committee
The committee reviewed its legal framework under Ontario Regulation 464/97, which outlines SEAC's mandate.

8. Special Education Updates

- Professional Development Updates presented by L. Bates
In September our Itinerant Teams – Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Blind and Low Vision, Education Coordinators and Tier 3 teams met together. Their focus was on collaboration, support and getting to know their teams more. In October all educators and education support staff participated in the following professional development: Universal Design for Learning - The Power of Reflection and Ministry Priorities, Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Security.
- Upcoming events/dates
 - Down Syndrome Month
 - Learning Disabilities Awareness Month
 - Canadian Autism Awareness Month
 - Dyslexia Awareness Month
 - ADHD Awareness Month
 - October 6, 2025 – World Cerebral Palsy Day
 - October 10, 2025 – World Mental Health Day
 - IEP and More Night – October 9, 2025, partners with Windsor Family Network, Windsor Essex Catholic District School Board and GECDSB – what is the IEP, needs and strengths – 6:30-8pm

9. Items for Future Agendas

No items suggested.

10. Association Reports

- M. Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association Windsor-Essex County – October is Learning Disabilities Awareness month. We are hosting an ADHD Parent Support Group meeting on Monday, October 20, 2025, at 6 pm.
- T. McCarthy, Autism Ontario - Autism Ontario Responds to Recent Claims Linking Tylenol to Autism. Further information is available on the Autism Ontario website, with additional information. We believe that these claims are misleading, and make it harder for people to make safe, evidence-based health decisions. Use the link below:

<https://www.autismontario.com/news/autism-ontario-responds-recent-claims-linking-tylenol-autism>

To help you and your family, we have compiled a list of resources to help make the school year successful.

This collection of resources aims to support caregivers in transitioning their child to school by building routines for success and supporting positive communication with their child's school team. See below for information and strategies for parents and caregivers of children at all stages in their school journey.

Videos for Preparing for your Child's Special Education Meeting: Parent Guide and Tips for Collaborating with the School: Autism and Special Education.

New Resources (PDF): Learning Together:

- 1) Kindergarten to Grade 3
- 2) Grades 4 to 8
- 3) Is e-learning effective for autistic secondary students?
- 4) School Terms Glossary
- 5) Setting up for School Success – Things to do before your child starts school
- 6) Setting up for School Success – Things to do after your child starts school

At-Home Activities for School Readiness and Kindergarten:

- At-Home Activities for School Readiness
- At-Home Activities for Kindergarten (Updated)

Autism Ontario invites parents/guardians to share their voice/stories. For additional resources please visit: <https://www.autismontario.com/news/school-collection>. New contact information: Regional Program and Volunteer Coordinator for Windsor/Essex: Brittany Whittington, can be reached by email at brittany.whittington@autismontario.com or by phone at 1-800-472-7789 ext. 221.

11. Distribution

None

12. Adjournment

Vice Chairperson McKinley adjourned the meeting at 1:42 pm.



NEXT MEETING, November 12, 2025

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

Vicki Houston, Director of Education

Chris Mills, Administrative Liaison

Tim McCarthy, SEAC Chairperson

[Ministry SEAC website](#)