



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Wednesday, June 11, 2025
Room 308, Education Centre**

Present

Association Representatives – voting members

- Judy Colantino, Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton, SEAC Chair
- Julie Armstrong, Centre for Diverse Learners
- Lindsay Bray, McMaster Children’s Hospital Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation Portfolio, SEAC Vice Chair
- Maria Felix Miller, HWDSB Chair, Trustee Ward 3
- Melanie Roberts, Association for Bright Children of Ontario
- Nancy Silva Khan, Autism Ontario (Central West Chapter)
- Sarah Pennington, Community Living Hamilton
- Vanessa Doslea, Lynwood Charlton Centre

Regrets

- Danielle Dion-Broadley, FASD Parent & Caregiver Support Group
- Dawn Danko, Trustee Ward 7
- Susi Owen, CNIB Hamilton and Niagara

Staff

- John Manzin, System Principal, Special Education, Inclusion & Equity: Transition Navigation
- Julie Anderson, System Principal, Special Education, Inclusion & Equity
- Krista Brodersen, Hamilton-Wentworth Principals’ Council – Elementary
- Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent, Special Education, Inclusion & Equity

Item	Discussion/Decision
1. Welcome and Call to Order	Judy Colantino called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm welcoming everyone
2. Land Acknowledgement	Judy Colantino, Chair of SEAC
3. Approval of Agenda	On the motion of Melanie Roberts, seconded by Julie Armstrong, the Committee recommends that the agenda be approved CARRIED.
4. HWDSB New Photography Branding	<p>Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education Allison Reynolds, Senior Manager, Communications & Community Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A presentation of new student photos was shared, celebrating the diversity of our student community and reflecting how deeply we embed belonging into everything we do at HWDSB. • The visual representation highlighted our ongoing commitment to inclusion, equity, and creating welcoming spaces where every student feels seen, valued, and connected.
5. Universal Life Skills Pilot Project	<p>Carina Gratton, Manager, Special Education, Inclusion & Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data presented indicated that the strategies implemented were successful, demonstrating positive outcomes and meaningful impact. • Next steps include translating materials into multiple languages, creating parent videos focused on key skills, and partnering with community organizations to further support engagement and inclusion.
6. EA Onboarding Pilot Project	Julie Anderson, System Principal, Special Education, Inclusion & Equity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project was developed to strengthen onboarding for newly hired casual Educational Assistants (EAs), with the goal of reducing unfilled EA positions. • Sessions included job shadowing, training in Behaviour Management Systems, supporting students with FASD, Emotion Coaching, and more. • The project will continue into the 2025–26 school year, with plans to develop impact measures for participants and explore partnerships with post-secondary institutions to support recruitment.
7. Approval of the Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ April 30, 2025 ▪ May 28, 2025 – no quorum 	<p>On the motion of Sarah Pennington, seconded by Nancy Silva Khan, the Committee recommends that the minutes of April 30 be approved CARRIED.</p> <p>The Committee confirms those present May 28th did not reach quorum.</p>
8. Business Arising from the Minutes	
9. Updates a) Trustees b) Local Association Representatives c) Superintendent	<p>Maria Felix Miller, HWDSB Chair, Trustee Ward 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board of Trustees recommended that staff consolidate accessible and inclusive policies into a single Pillar Policy focused on Special Education. This unified approach will support greater clarity, alignment, and commitment to equity and inclusion for all students with exceptionalities. • The Finance and Facilities Committee presented the Board budget for 25-26, which includes retaining the 19 Educational Assistant (EA) positions that were allocated last year. Final approval by the Board of Trustees at the next Board Meeting. <p>Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent, Special Education, Inclusion & Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are currently preparing applications for Ministry funding to support student transitions and future readiness. These initiatives aim to enhance pathways planning, skill development, and successful transitions for all learners. • Staff hiring is underway for summer learning programs and projects. A report on the impact and outcomes of these programs will be shared at the fall meeting. • The Ministry has approved an extension for the submission of the Special Education Plan. As a result, a special virtual SEAC meeting will be held on September 10th for the Committee to review and approve the Plan for submission to the Board of Trustees, prior to final submission to the Ministry. The draft Plan will be shared with SEAC members over the summer for their review and feedback.
10. Correspondence a) Lynwood Charlton Centre – approval of new SEAC Representative	<p>On a motion by Julie Armstrong, seconded by Sarah Pennington, the Committee recommends that Vanessa Doslea be appointed as the representative for Lynwood Charlton Centre on SEAC CARRIED.</p>
11. Other Business	
12. Adjournment	<p>On a motion by Melanie Roberts, seconded by Nancy Silva Khan, the Committee recommended that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm CARRIED.</p>