



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, November 26, 2025

Room 181B, Education Centre

Present

Association Representatives – voting members

Danielle Dion-Broadley, FASD Parent & Caregiver Support Group

Dawn Danko, Trustee Ward 7

Judy Colantino, Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton, SEAC Chair

Lindsay Bray, McMaster Children’s Hospital Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation Portfolio, SEAC Vice Chair

Melanie Roberts, Association for Bright Children of Ontario

Nancy Silva Khan, Autism Ontario (Central West Chapter)

Sarah Pennington, Community Living Hamilton

Susi Owen, CNIB Hamilton and Niagara

Vanessa Doslea, Lynwood Charlton Centre

Regrets

Maria Felix Miller, HWDSB Chair, Trustee Ward 3

Samantha Sweet, Centre for Diverse Learners

Staff

Jennifer Bibby, COPE 527 Representative

Julie Anderson, System Principal, Special Education, Inclusion & Equity

Krista Brodersen, Hamilton-Wentworth Principals’ Council – Elementary

Paul Denomme, Superintendent, Equity and Student Achievement, Family of Schools 1

Item	Discussion/Decision
1. Welcome and Call to Order	Judy Colantino called the meeting to order at 5:39 pm welcoming everyone
2. Land Acknowledgement	Judy Colantino, Chair of SEAC
3. Approval of Agenda	On the motion of Dawn Danko, seconded by Lindsay Bray, the Committee recommends that the agenda be approved CARRIED.
4. New Accessibility Funding	David Anderson, Senior Manager, Facility Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Ministry of Education has provided \$5,811,583 in one-time funding for accessibility projects within HWDSB to be expended by August 31, 2026• \$3,000,000 of this amount will replenish proceeds of disposition funds previously approved through a Minister’s exemption• Three potential elevator projects (CB Stirling, Norwood Park and Mary Hopkins) have been identified for future consideration. These funds will also cover design and approval costs if additional Ministry funding is not provided• Remaining funds will support other accessibility improvements, such as stage lifts, washroom upgrades etc., previously funded through school renewal dollars

<p>5. Building Responsive Approaches for Instructional Needs (BRAIN)</p>	<p>Danielle Buist, Manager, Special Education, Inclusion & Equity: Psychological Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through various links to resources to support understanding and application, the Guide provides an overview of key processing areas that impact student learning, such as verbal comprehension, visual memory and executive functioning • It is designed for staff use, to help understand learning profiles, support students in their areas of need, and reduce cognitive load to improve learning outcomes • The Guide includes links to a virtual library with infolets on mental health, curriculum apps, and accessibility feature databases • Committee members are invited to contribute additional resources to enhance the Guide
<p>6. Approval of the Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ September 24, 2025 </p>	<p>On the motion of Susi Owen, seconded by Sarah Pennington, the Committee recommends that the minutes be approved</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED.</p>
<p>7. Business Arising from the Minutes</p>	
<p>8. Updates a) Trustees b) Local Association Representatives c) Superintendent</p>	<p>Paul Denomme, Superintendent of Equity & Student Achievement, FOS 1 on behalf of Dawn Danko, Trustee Ward 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees had their organizational board meeting where we select committees and chairs – Chair Miller and Vice Chair Tut will continue in their roles again this year • Bill 33 passed in the legislation, and it will have impacts on school boards – we are waiting on further direction regarding specific items in the Bill • Trustees reviewed the initial draft of the school year calendar; the calendar will go out for consultation and come back to the Board in the new year for approval • The school naming policy is out for consultation – the Minister of Education now must approve any school names under Bill 33 • Trustees will be presented with the Program Review report at the next Program Meeting – the review looked at all specialized programs, French programming, and it touched on Special Education, but that wasn't the focus of the project <p>Vanessa Doslea, Lynwood Charlton Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our organization has completed a rebranding initiative, which includes a new logo and an updated website <p>Lindsay Bray, McMaster Children's Hospital Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation Portfolio, SEAC Vice Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A presentation on Universal Design for Learning by Carina Gratton was well received – staff plan to implement strategies that were shared • Several students from our speech department have written books about stuttering – sharing what they wished their friends and teachers knew when they were younger – our staff will distribute the books to schools <p>Paul Denomme, Superintendent of Equity & Student Achievement, FOS 1 on behalf of Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent of Special Education, Inclusion & Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry approved the funding for two of our applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development for Speech and Language Department, focusing on inclusion & equity for students with diverse communication needs - \$44,604

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility Expansion and Integration: Strengthening Student Transition in HWDSB 2025-26 - \$56,500 • Since September, Special Education staff have been collaborating with the Program Department on monthly professional learning for principals and vice principals – learning has focused on literacy and numeracy. In November and December, principals and vice principals are learning about the BRAIN document (which you did this evening), and all school staff will also learn about this resource during a staff meeting between December and March • There have been several changes to ECPP (Education & Community Partnership Programs) – the biggest change is that the programs are now divided into two groups ECPP and CTEP (Care & Treatment Education Programs): ECPP is for students connected to corrections and CTEP is for students whose primary need is treatment. We have been meeting with the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board to plan for students in the community – more details will be provided at next meeting • COPE PA Day – Thank you to those around the SEAC table who attended and supported the Learning Marketplace for which we received amazing feedback from staff – more information will be shared at next meeting • November 13 was Educational Assistant Appreciation Day – this is an important day to recognize the invaluable contributions of the HWDSB Educational Assistants. EAs play a critical role in supporting student success, inclusion & well-being for learners with special education needs. Their dedication ensures that every student can engage meaningfully in learning and experience a sense of belonging. We extend our gratitude for their commitment, compassion & collaboration in creating equitable and supportive learning environments • Upcoming Dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 1st – Angela Giardino starting as System Principal for Special Education, Inclusion & Equity – we thank and appreciate John Whitwell for stepping in and supporting us during this time • December 3rd – International Day of Persons with Disabilities • December 4th – Barrier Free Physical Learning Environments Policy to Policy Committee
9. Correspondence	
10. Other Business	
11. Adjournment	<p>On the motion of Sarah Pennington, seconded by Danielle Dion-Broadley, the Committee recommends that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 pm.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED.</p>