



**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, September 24, 2025**

**Room 308, Education Centre**

**Present**

**Association Representatives – voting members**

Judy Colantino, Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton, SEAC Chair

Maria Felix Miller, HWDSB Chair, Trustee Ward 3

Melanie Roberts, Association for Bright Children of Ontario

Sarah Pennington, Community Living Hamilton

Susi Owen, CNIB Hamilton and Niagara

Vanessa Doslea, Lynwood Charlton Centre

**Regrets**

Danielle Dion-Broadley, FASD Parent & Caregiver Support Group

Dawn Danko, Trustee Ward 7

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

Nancy Silva Khan, Autism Ontario (Central West Chapter)

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

Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent, Special Education, Inclusion & Equity

**Guests**

Three Brock University Students

<b>Item</b>	<b>Discussion/Decision</b>
<b>1. Welcome and Call to Order</b>	Judy Colantino called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm welcoming everyone
<b>2. Land Acknowledgement</b>	Judy Colantino, Chair of SEAC
<b>3. Approval of Agenda</b>	On the motion of Sarah Pennington, seconded by Susi Owen, the Committee recommends that the agenda be approved <b>CARRIED.</b>
<b>4. SEAC Orientation</b>	Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent, Special Education, Inclusion & Equity <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>An overview of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) procedures was presented, outlining roles and responsibilities, meeting norms, and other key components, in accordance with Ontario Ministry of Education Regulation 464/97 <a href="#">guidelines</a></li></ul>

<b>5. Engagement Framework Consultation</b>	<p>Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent, Special Education, Inclusion &amp; Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The committee divided into breakout groups to provide feedback on the development of a framework for engagement of students and families who access special education supports and services</li> </ul>
<b>6. Approval of the Minutes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>June 11, 2025</li> <li>September 10, 2025</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On a motion by Sarah Pennington, seconded by Susi Owen, the Committee recommended the approval of the minutes from the June 11, 2025 meeting <b>CARRIED.</b></li> <li>On a motion by Susi Owen, seconded by Sarah Pennington, the Committee recommended the approval of the minutes from the September 10, 2025 meeting <b>CARRIED.</b></li> </ul>
<b>7. Business Arising from the Minutes</b>	
<b>8. Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Trustees</li> <li>b) Local Association Representatives</li> <li>c) Superintendent</li> </ul>	<p><b>Maria Felix Miller, HWDSB Chair, Trustee Ward 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-org occurring October 9<sup>th</sup>, schools will connect with impacted families</li> <li>Ministry is reviewing the Board of Trustees structure across the province</li> </ul> <p><b>Judy Colantino, SEAC Chair, Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Association held their annual walk funding campaign to support programs and services</li> </ul> <p><b>Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent of Special Education, Inclusion &amp; Equity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We're now in the second year of EA onboarding, with staff providing highly positive feedback – EAs feel more confident in their role and are committed to continue in the role – we had 66 new EAs attend onboarding training - all positions were successfully filled the first day of school</li> <li>We remain committed to professional learning on every PA Day - for the upcoming COPE PA Day on November 21st, Michael Jacques will serve as the keynote speaker, accompanied by a series of engaging breakout sessions</li> <li>On November 21st, secondary learning resource teachers and secondary special class teachers will participate in a full day of subject-specific professional learning</li> <li>We are continuing with professional learning for learning resource teachers and special class teachers throughout the school year</li> <li>New ASD special class teachers will take part in seven full days of professional learning throughout the year as part of their professional learning community</li> <li>We're launching the Special Education Student Advisory Circles – these circles are designed to amplify student voice, especially those who access special education supports and services – educators will receive facilitation materials and discussion prompts throughout the year – so far, we have 11 classrooms volunteering to participate – we will share feedback with SEAC</li> <li>Over the summer, the Ministry provided funding to school boards for facility improvements related to accessibility. Associate</li> </ul>

	Director Matthew Gerard will attend an upcoming meeting to share details on how these funds are being utilized to enhance accessibility in our schools.
<b>9. Correspondence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Centre for Diverse Learners – membership update</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the motion of Sarah Pennington, seconded by Susi Owen, the Committee recommends updating the membership for the Centre for Diverse Learners, appointing Carolyn Rankin-Boutin as alternate member and Samantha Sweet as the primary member <b>CARRIED.</b></li> </ul>
<b>10. Other Business</b>	
<b>11. Adjournment</b>	On the motion of Sarah Pennington, seconded by Susi Owen, the Committee recommends that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 pm  <b>CARRIED.</b>