



# GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Special Education Advisory Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at the Administration Building, 451 Park Street W., Windsor, ON.

### MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Tim McCarthy, Autism Ontario  
Martha Vukov, Community Living Essex County  
Kim McKinley, Trustee  
Mary Ann Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor Essex County  
Nancy Armstrong, Trustee  
Amanda DenHartogh, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder/Ontario Network of Expertise  
Joanna Conrad, Windsor-Essex Down Syndrome Association

### BOARD PERSONNEL IN ATTENDANCE

Chris Mills, Superintendent of Schools/Special Education Program and Services  
Laura Bates, Supervising Principal of Special Education  
Vicki Houston, Director of Education  
Marc Crundwell, Supervisor of Psychological and Speech Language Services  
Lana Brode, Education Coordinator

### REGRETS

Chelsea Lackovic, Windsor Council of Home and School Association  
Michelle Lowes, OPC Elementary Representative  
Teresa Williams, OPC Secondary Representative

### RECORDER

Melissa Beaton

#### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m.

#### 2. Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are on land and surrounded by water, originally inhabited by Indigenous Peoples who have travelled this area since time immemorial. This territory is within the lands honoured by the Wampum Treaties; agreements between the Anishinaabe (Ah-nish-e-naa-bay), Haudenosaunee (Hoe-den-oh-show-nee), Lenni (Len-eh) Lenape (Le-naw-pay) and allied Nations to peacefully share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Specifically, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the Three Fires Confederacy, Ojibwe (Oh-jib-way), Odawa (Oh-dah-wah), Potawatomi (Paw-taw-watt-ohme) and Huron/Wendat (Wen-dat) Peoples. We are dedicated to honouring Indigenous history and culture while remaining committed to moving forward respectfully with all First Nations, Inuit and Métis

3. Elections for Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson (Association Chair and Trustee Vice-Chair)  
C. Mills thanked K. McKinley for her service as SEAC Chair for the 2024 year. Quorum was established and declared nominations open for the position of Chairperson for SEAC for the 2025 year.

Moved by: K. McKinley

That T. McCarthy be nominated as the Chairperson of SEAC for the 2025 year. T. McCarthy accepted the nomination. Seconded by M. Vukov. C. Mills called for any other nominations. There were no other nominations. C. Mills declared T. McCarthy as the Chairperson of SEAC for the year 2025 by acclamation.

Nominations for Vice-chairperson

Moved by N. Armstrong

That K. McKinley be nominated as the Vice-chairperson of SEAC for the year 2025. K. McKinley accepted the nomination. Seconded by M. Fuduric. T. McCarthy asked for any other nominations. There were no other nominations. T. McCarthy declared K. McKinley as the Vice-chairperson of SEAC for the year 2025 by acclamation.

4. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: K. McKinley

Seconded by: M. Fuduric

That SEAC approve the Agenda for December 11, 2024.

The motion was carried.

5. Approval of Minutes

Moved by: K. McKinley

Seconded by: M. Fuduric

That SEAC approve the minutes of November 13, 2024.

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

- L. Brode presented Hack the Holidays. Hack the Holidays is a collaboration between GECDSB and John McGivney School Authority. This year GECDSB's Special Education team partnered with Student Success. Mainstream secondary students gained hands-on experience to support local families and foster a strong sense of community. We hosted two student events one at Tecumseh Vista Academy Innovation Centre Event where robotic students and computer engineering student from across GECDSB came together for a full day of adapting toys and building switches. The second was held at Belle River District High School where grade 11 and 12 computer engineering students spent the day adapting toys. Parents were invited to attend an event held on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, where they could select a switch and an adapted toy. They also had an opportunity to meet with Occupational Therapists to support families on facilitating use of the toys and switches and Speech Language Pathologists to learn how adapted toys can support communication. They could also explore a Maker's Making Change station to discover

resources and register for adapted gifts. 27 families attended the event, and we hope to grow it in the future.

The team was also excited to share a Brain Computer Interface (BCI) project that was started last school year. L. Brode helped to adapt a two-seater bike that can now be used with BCI equipment. The Team has also created a Switch Library that Teachers can access through the Media Centre.

## 8. Special Education Updates

- Update on Restructuring Supports for Special Education, C. Mills shared that he would continue to update the Committee at where we are at in the process. Principal were provided information to share with families. Parent consultation has started, and we can review that in the new year. We will also look at Community Partners in the new year. We continue to have open lines of communication and invite feedback/concerns from our families and this Committee. We are starting to see some themes develop, similar to what the committee expressed, like academic support, social/emotional support, resources, IEP development, etc. Feedback will be shared with our Senior Team, and we will look at each school.
- Professional Development Updates  
L. Bates shared that a lot of learning is going on not only in the schools but in the community. The feedback for November 15<sup>th</sup> Professional Development Day has been very positive. We received emails from staff: fantastic presentations, appreciated the real examples, fun ideas and small group setting, teams continue to ask for this type of opportunity. In the new year we will continue with Universal Design and Differentiated Instruction learning.

## 9. New Business

- T. McCarthy, suggested we establish a committee in the new year for governance and rules for SEAC members, including what the Ministry of Education presented in October. If interested, please forward your name to C. Mills.

## 10. Association Reports

- M. Fuduric, Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex County – We are done with our basement renovations for classroom spaces, we are very excited about that. Programs are starting January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
- J. Conrad, Windsor-Essex Down Syndrome Association – We received a lot of applications for a reading instructor, that program will start in the new year. We also have a Christmas Party this month.
- T. McCarthy, Autism Ontario – Autism Ontario Updates for December 2024, highlighted “Giaci & Me A Mother’s Journey of Loving and Raising an Autistic Child” a book written by Rita Micelli a former teacher.  
Autism Ontario is offering SEAC introductory training to become a SEAC representative.

## 11. Distribution

- Limestone District School Board
- Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario

## 12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.



NEXT MEETING, January 8, 2025

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

Vicki Houston, Director of Education

Chris Mills, Administrative Liaison

[Ministry SEAC website](#)