



## MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Wednesday, December 17, 2025  
Room 180 A, Education Centre**

### Present

#### Association Representatives – voting members

Danielle Dion-Broadley, FASD Parent & Caregiver Support Group  
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

### Regrets

Dawn Danko, Trustee Ward 7  
Maria Felix Miller, HWDSB Chair, Trustee Ward 3  
Samantha Sweet, Centre for Diverse Learners  
Vanessa Doslea, Lynwood Charlton Centre

### Staff

Heather Fudge, Hamilton-Wentworth Elementary Teachers Local (HWETL)  
Jennifer Bibby, Canadian Office and Professional Employees (COPE 527) Representative  
John Manzin, System Principal, Special Education, Inclusion & Equity  
Julie Anderson, System Principal, Special Education, Inclusion & Equity  
Julie Boulton, Hamilton-Wentworth Principals' Council  
Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent, Special Education, Inclusion & Equity

Item	Discussion/Decision
<b>1. Welcome and Call to Order</b>	Judy Colantino called the meeting to order at 5:39 pm welcoming everyone
<b>2. Land Acknowledgement</b>	Judy Colantino, Chair of SEAC
<b>3. Approval of Agenda</b>	On the motion of Susi Owen, seconded by Sarah Pennington, the Committee recommends that the agenda be approved <b>CARRIED.</b>
<b>4. Reimagining HWDSB's Websites- Engagement Session</b>	Blaze Dumitrescu-Forgie, Communication & Community Engagement Officer <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Committee shared feedback and suggestions to improve user experience and accessibility across HWDSB's websites</li></ul>

<b>5. Annual Accessibility Report</b>	<p>Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent, Special Education, Inclusion &amp; Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, the Annual Accessibility Report is prepared each year and posted on the website, highlighting new initiatives and key accomplishments</li> <li>• Key Highlights for 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Accessible Communication &amp; Design:</b> Improved readability, contrast compliance, and use of accessibility testing tools in all designed materials</li> <li>○ <b>New AODA-Compliant Website:</b> Development underway to meet and exceed WCAG standards, with consultation from SEAC and student advisory circles</li> <li>○ <b>Inclusive Employment Practices:</b> Demographic survey revealed 27.6% of staff identify as having a disability; continued support for accommodations and Project SEARCH transition-to-work program</li> <li>○ <b>Accessible Transportation:</b> Multi-year approval process implemented for students requiring specialized transportation, reducing delays and improving efficiency</li> <li>○ <b>Barrier-Free Physical Learning Environment Policy:</b> This policy supports HWDSB in creating learning environments that are physically and culturally accessible, inclusive, and learner-centered</li> <li>○ <b>Physical Environment Enhancements:</b> Renovations included accessible washrooms, stage lifts, ramps, tactile warning pads, and installation of elevators and chairlifts</li> <li>○ <b>Assistive Technology Support:</b> Centre 4 Success provided coaching and workshops to help students leverage SEA-funded technology for equitable access to curriculum</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>6. Approval of the Minutes</b> ▪ <b>November 26, 2025</b>	<p>On the motion of Lindsay Bray, seconded by Nancy Silva-Khan, the Committee recommends that the minutes be approved</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>CARRIED.</b></p>
<b>7. Business Arising from the Minutes</b>	
<b>8. Updates</b> a) Trustees b) Local Association Representatives c) Superintendent	<p><b>Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent, Special Education, Inclusion &amp; Equity on behalf of Trustees</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2026–27 school year calendar is now available for public consultation on the Engage website</li> </ul> <p><b>Lindsay Bray, McMaster Children’s Hospital Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation Portfolio, SEAC Vice Chair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Speech and Language team is holding collaborative meetings with both Boards and the French Board, following an annual rotation schedule</li> </ul> <p><b>Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent, Special Education, Inclusion &amp; Equity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting special education classrooms at various schools</li> <li>• Brian Mason has been elected as the President-elect for the Ontario Association for Behavior Analysis (ONTABA). This is a significant achievement that reflects Brian’s leadership, expertise, and commitment to advancing best practices in Applied Behavior Analysis across Ontario. As President-elect, Brian will play a key role in shaping the future of ONTABA and supporting professionals dedicated to improving outcomes for individuals through evidence-based approaches</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EQAO results are out – we’re seeing improvements in many areas year over year</li> <li>• Work has started on reviewing the Plan of Care Procedure</li> <li>• Angela Giardino has begun her role as a system principal for Special Education, Inclusion &amp; Equity and will attend future meetings</li> </ul>
<b>9. Correspondence</b>	
<b>10. Other Business</b>	
<b>11. Adjournment</b>	<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 7:31 pm</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>CARRIED.</b></p>