

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, September 4, 2024, at 6:00pm

Hybrid Meeting:

In-Person: St. Francis Room (2nd Floor) Catholic Education Centre

Online: [Join the meeting](#)

WCDSB Mission Statement

*As disciples of Christ,
we educate and nurture hope
in all learners
to realize their full potential
to transform God's world.*

Co-chairs: Cindy Benedetti and Laura Shoemaker

MEMBERS

WCDSB Trustee - **Bob Sikora**

WCDSB Trustee – **Conrad Stanley**

Waterloo Regional Down Syndrome Society - **Kim Murphy**

Waterloo Regional Police - **Amanda Hennig**

Family and Children's Services of Waterloo Region - **Cindy Benedetti**

Waterloo Region Family Network - **Erin Sutherland**

Centre for ADHD Awareness - **Daina Colbourne**

International Dyslexia Association Ontario - **Laura Shoemaker**

Autism Ontario - **Monica Wenzlaff**

Member at Large - **Jeanne Gravelle**



**Waterloo Catholic
District School Board**
Quality, Inclusive, Faith Based Education

35 Weber St. W., Unit A
Kitchener, ON, Canada N2H 3Z1
519-578-3660
info@wcdsb.ca



SEAC Committee Meeting Agenda

Date& Time:	September 4, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.
Location (Hybrid)	In-Person: St. Francis Room (2 nd Floor), Catholic Education Centre Online: Via Teams Join the meeting
Next Meeting:	October 2, 2024, @ 6:00 pm
Committee Members: Kim Murphy, Amanda Hennig, Cindy Benedetti, Erin Sutherland, Daina Colbourne, Laura Shoemaker, Jeanne Gravelle, Monica Wenzlaff, Bob Sikora, Conrad Stanley	
Administrative Officials: Gerald Foran, Erin Lemak	
Regards:	

1. Opening Prayer Welcome	Erin Lemak
2. Approval of Agenda Motion by: Seconded:	
3. Declared Pecuniary Interest	
4. Approval of the June minutes: Motion by: Seconded:	
School System Operational Business	
5.1. Special Education Plan 5.2. PD Day Agenda 5.3 Professional Development for 2024/2025	G. Foran G. Foran G. Foran/E. Lemak
6. Ministry Updates (10 min) 6.1. Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board letter to the Minister of Education regarding need for increased funding to support students with complex needs in our educational system.	G. Foran
7. SEAC Committee Functions	
8. Policy Advice to the Board	
9. Updates	
10. Pending Items	
11. Adjournment Motion by: Seconded:	
12. Action Items Place Holder	



**Waterloo Catholic
District School Board**
Quality, Inclusive, Faith Based Education

Agenda



SEAC Committee Meeting Minutes

Date& Time:	June 5, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.
Location (Hybrid)	In-Person: St. Francis Room (2 nd Floor), Catholic Education Centre Online: Via Teams Join the meeting now
Next Meeting:	September 4, 2024, @ 6:00 pm
Committee Members: Kim Murphy, Amanda Hennig, Cindy Benedetti, Erin Sutherland, Daina Colbourne, Laura Shoemaker, Jeanne Gravelle, Monica Wenzlaff, Bob Sikora, Conrad Stanley	
Administrative Officials: Gerald Foran, Erin Lemak	

1. Opening Prayer Welcome	Erin Lemak
2. Approval of Agenda Motion by: Jeanne Gravelle Seconded: Monica Wenzlaff	
3. Declared Pecuniary Interest N/A	
4. Approval of the May minutes: Motion by: Laura Shoemaker Seconded: Jeanne Gravelle	
School System Operational Business	
5.1. 24-25 Special Education Budget Estimates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next year budget estimates presented to the committee. • Committee suggested to review the updated SEA funding budget spending mid-year, and if any concerns, to write the letter to the Ministry. <p><i>Motion to accept 2024-2025 Special Education Budget Estimates as presented to SEAC Committee.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion passed. 	R. King
5.2. PD Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Education Teacher PD for 24-25 	E. Lemak
6. Ministry Updates (10 min) N/A	G. Foran
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7. SEAC Committee Functions • 7.1. Motion: October – ADHD recognition month • Motion Daina Colbourne Seconded: Monica Wenzlaff 	D. Colbourne



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee discussed and agreed that the recognition of ADHD should be by sharing the resources and information with our staff and communities. • Gerald and Erin to explore opportunities to incorporating ADHD information and resources into staff PD 	
<p>8. Policy Advice to the Board N/A</p>	
<p>9. Updates</p> <p>9.1. WWDSB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WWDSB is holding a subsidized 1-week Summer School Camp. It's going to be a fun-filled summer school camp designed especially for our members with Down syndrome, ages 4-21! Support is provided. <p>9.2. WRFN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Supports: Introducing a new service delivery model for Erin's school related supports in order to keep up with the increasing demand we are looking to bring parents together in a group format to address common questions and concerns. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ A monthly peer-led support group for parents of children and youth with special needs where real-life experiences, tips and strategies are shared; ➢ Workshops in partnership with the local school boards, and ➢ A series of WRFN topical workshops (starting in August 2024) to address common questions, issues, and concerns. • We are members of the Waterloo Region District School Board and Waterloo Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committees (SEAC), assisting in examining, reviewing, and making recommendations regarding the provision of special education programs and services. • Kaleidoscope Kids: Running each Tuesday this summer from 2:00 – 3:00 pm at 161 Roger St Waterloo (EarlyON Roger St location). • Events: Please see here for WRFN's ongoing events: https://wrfn.info/events/ <p>9.3. AUTISM ONTARIO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism Ontario Updates <p>9.4. WRPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Neurodiverse Children and Youth: An Anti-Oppressive Approach Workshop (Remote) <p>9.5. TRUSTEE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair Sikora updated SEAC on May events. 	<p>All</p>
<p>10. Pending Items N/A</p>	
<p>11. Adjournment Motion by: Kim Murphy Seconded: Laura Shoemaker</p>	
<p>12. Action Items Place Holder N/A</p>	



Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board

799 16th Avenue, Hanover, ON N4N 3A1

519-364-5820

1-877-471-8121

F:519-364-5882

www.bgcdsb.org

E:bruce.grey@bgcdsb.org

June 13, 2024

The Honourable Todd Smith
Ministry of Education
5th Floor, 438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M7A 2A5

Dear Minister Todd Smith:

I am writing to you today to express a pressing concern regarding the need for increased funding to support students with complex needs in our educational system. While the Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board's (BGCDSB) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) acknowledges the increases to Special Education spending for the 2023-24 school year; we are concerned that the increases do not adequately meet the funding that is required to support students with increasingly complex special education needs.

At BGCDSB, we believe in inclusive education and have witnessed firsthand the profound impact that adequate resources can have on the academic and personal development of these students. Students with complex needs often require specialized instruction, individualized support, and access to a range of services to thrive in a mainstream educational environment. These services include, but are not limited to, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, psychological support, and specialized instructional materials. The demand for such resources is growing, yet the current funding levels are insufficient to meet the needs of these students effectively.

As a school board, our special education workers report increased numbers of students with complex needs, especially in our primary grades. However, we are unable to increase spending on classroom supports such as Educational Assistants, professional development for teachers, and modifications to physical spaces to create more inclusive environments for these students. We believe this situation is not unique to BGCDSB. Many of our students with complex needs include those who have a comorbidity with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Studies from both Canadian and American sources indicate an increase in the prevalence of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). In 2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported an ASD prevalence rate of approximately 1 in 88 children. In 2019, the Canadian health survey on children and youth reported an ASD prevalence rate of 1 in 50 children. The American Academy of Pediatrics issued a news release in 2023 reporting the prevalence of ASD had risen to 1 in 36 children. The report "underscores the considerable need for equitable and accessible screening, services, and support for all children".

Supporting students with complex needs is not just a matter of equity; it is a fundamental component of a just and inclusive society. By investing in these students, we are investing in a future where all individuals can reach their full potential and contribute meaningfully to our communities.

I urge you to consider the critical need for increased funding for special education services and to take the necessary steps to ensure that all students, regardless of their needs, receive the support and resources they need and deserve to thrive. Your leadership and commitment to this cause can make a significant difference in the lives of countless students and their families. We look forward to learning how the Ministry will follow up to provide special education funding that addresses the increasing complexities of student needs in our school systems.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Grey".

On behalf of the SEAC Chair
Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board