

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 8, 2024, at 6:00pm

Hybrid Meeting:

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

Online: [Join the meeting now](#)

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 - **Karen Applebee**

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:	January 8, 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:	February 5, 2025, @ 6:00 pm
Committee Members: Kim Murphy, Amanda Hennig, Cindy Benedetti, Karen Applebee, 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: Seconded:	
3. Declared Pecuniary Interest	
4. Approval of the December minutes: Motion by: Seconded:	
5. School System Operational Business 5.1. Math Achievement Action Plan Update	P. LeDuc Board Math Lead
6. Ministry Updates (10 min) 6.1. Limestone District School Board SEAC letter to the Ontario College of Teachers regarding special education training.	G. Foran
7. SEAC Committee Functions 8.1. Grace for All: Celebrating the sacraments with those with special needs – Updates	E. Lemak
8. Policy Advice to the Board	
9. Updates	
10. Pending Items	
11. Adjournment Motion by: Seconded:	



12. Action Items Place Holder	
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SEAC Committee Meeting Minutes

Date & Time:	December 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 now
Next Meeting:	January 8, 2025, @ 6:00 pm
Committee Members: Kim Murphy, Amanda Hennig, Cindy Benedetti, Karen Applebee, Daina Colbourne, Laura Shoemaker, Jeanne Gravelle, Monica Wenzlaff, Bob Sikora, Conrad Stanley	
Administrative Officials: Gerald Foran, Erin Lemak Regrets: Amanda Hennig	

1. Opening Prayer Welcome	Erin Lemak	
2. Approval of Agenda Motion by: Laura Shoemaker Seconded: Jeanne Gravelle		
3. Declared Pecuniary Interest N/A		
4. Approval of the November minutes: Motion by: Laura Shoemaker Seconded: Jeanne Gravelle		
5. School System Operational Business 5.1. Mental Health Update Q&A	Andrea Snyder Mental Health Lead	
6. Ministry Updates (10 min) 6.1. Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education, MACSE, looking for input from the SEAC committee. Form shared with members and asked for feedback. 6.2. SEAC Meeting Set Up ➤ Dinner paused ➤ Form sent to members to express their preference to meeting start time and virtual/hybrid or in person option for the meetings.	G. Foran SEAC	
7. SEAC Committee 7.1. Grace for All Preparing for the Sacraments for students with special needs.	E. Lemak	
TASK	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DATE to be completed
LOGISTICS		
Date of Event: Feb 5, 2025	SEAC	Nov 6, 2024



Location of Event: St Anthony Daniel	SEAC	Nov 6, 2024
Title of Event: Grace for All: Celebrating the sacraments with those with special needs Grace for All: Preparing for the Sacraments for Students with Special Needs	SEAC	Nov 6, 2024
Room Booking	Erin	Nov 7, 2024
CONTENT PREPARATION		
Liturgy and Presentation	Lisa/Richard	Dec 9, 2024: Meeting with: - Gerald Foran - Paul Mendonca - Richard Olsen - Laura Shoemaker - Jeanne Gravelle - Erin Lemak - Lisa Denomme
Content	Erin and SLP/SEL/BA	Erin meeting with members of Student Services on Dec 9, 2024
Planning Tool	Erin	Erin to put on board letterhead and make copies for the night of event
ONE MONTH PRIOR TO EVENT		
Administrator Meeting/Rough numbers from schools	Erin and Gerald	December 10, 2024
Parent Flyer: registration closed mid Jan	Erin	Dec 2024 School Messenger Dec/Jan Social media
Information to Parishes	Erin/Lisa	Deanery meeting – after our event Mailing list



Meet with Parishes/Deanery	Erin/Lisa/Richard/Gerald/Jeanne		
Request kits from schools	Erin	December 2024	
Have a few kits at our event for families to look at – Erin will notify school admin which families would like to sign out the kits			
FOR THE NIGHT OF...			
Parent Feedback Survey Planning tool	Erin		
Kit Set up	SEAC		
8. Policy Advice to the Board N/A			
9. Updates			
9.1. Trustee Updates:			
➤ Chair Sikora updated SEAC on October events			
9.2 WRFN:			
➤ IEP Workshop on January 22, 2025 Flyer			
9.3. Autism Updates:			
➤ Journey to Adulthood virtual session on December 11, 2024 Flyer			
9.4 WWDSS:			
➤ We held a very successful “DECADE of Advocacy” event on Oct 27 to celebrates 10 years of challenging stereotypes and advocating for authentic representation of individuals with Down syndrome.			
➤ This winter we will continue to run our Mother’s Connection, Cooking Classes, Speech & Social Groups, Teen & Adults Hangouts			
9.5 Project Search was celebrated on social media and local TV stations			
10. Pending Items N/A			
11. Adjournment Motion by: Jeanne Gravelle Seconded: Laura Shoemaker			
12. Action Items Place Holder N/A			

November 6, 2024

Linda Lacroix, Registrar and CEO
Office of the Register
Ontario College of Teachers

Sent via email: llacroix@oct.ca

Dear Linda Lacroix,

The Limestone District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) would like to bring forward several concerns related to the current state of teacher training at Ontario's Teacher Colleges, particularly in the area of Special Education. We also recognize that many of these concerns are consistent across the province.

While the current teacher education curriculum typically includes courses on pedagogy, curriculum development, assessment and evaluation, classroom management, and educational psychology, there is a noticeable underemphasis on the importance of special education training. Moreover, there is a clear lack of consistency across Ontario's Teacher Colleges in delivering this essential learning.

Our concerns are rooted in several key areas. First, there is a lack of comprehensive special education training in initial teacher education programs. Despite the diversity of learners in Ontario classrooms, teachers are not receiving consistent preparation in this vital area. Furthermore, Ontario's classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse, both culturally and in terms of student learning needs, and teachers must be adequately prepared to address this wide range of abilities. Unfortunately, data from the LDSB student census indicates that students with special education needs continue to face significant academic and social challenges, often due to teachers' limited knowledge and training in this area. Compounding this issue, the limited number of Professional Activity (PA) Days available for ongoing professional development restricts the opportunities for teachers to focus on special education once they are in the field.

Addressing these concerns is essential. Research consistently shows that teachers who receive formal special education training are more effective in supporting students with disabilities, leading to better outcomes for these students. Additionally, such training equips teachers to implement Individual Education Plans (IEPs) more effectively and differentiate instruction to meet the diverse needs of all students. Teachers with comprehensive special education training are also more likely to foster inclusive, supportive learning environments that benefit not only students with special education needs but all students in the classroom.

Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional
territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee.

Robin Hutcheon, Chair | Krishna Burra, Director of Education and Secretary | Craig Young, Treasurer

[See Yourself in Limestone](#)



The LDSB SEAC strongly encourages the Ontario College of Teachers, in consultation with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Education, to ensure that special education training becomes a core component of all teacher preparation programs in Ontario. We believe this programming should be responsive to the evolving needs of Ontario students, with regular review and oversight by special education experts, both at the Teacher College level and within schools themselves. By doing so, we can help ensure that all new teachers enter the profession equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to support students with special education needs from their very first day in the classroom.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. McGregor", written in a cursive style.

Trustee Karen McGregor,
Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee

cc: Jill Dunlop, Minister of Education
Nolan Quinn, Minister of Colleges and Universities
Stephanie Donaldson, OPSBA Executive Director
Chairs of Ontario School Boards' Special Education Advisory Committees

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SeeYourselfinLimestone.ca