

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 1, 2025, at 6:00pm

Hybrid Meeting: [Join the meeting](#)

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

Online:

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**

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:	October 1, 2025, 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:	November 5, 2025 @ 6:00 pm
Committee Members: Kim Murphy, Amanda Hennig, Cindy Benedetti, Karen Applebee, 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 May minutes: Motion by: Seconded:	
5. School System Operational Business 5.1. AI-How Can It Help Our Students	W. McKinley K. Gouett
6. Ministry Updates (10 min)	
7. SEAC Committee Functions: 7.1. Sacramental Kits	All 15 min
8. Policy Advice to the Board	
9. Updates	
10. Pending Items	
11. Adjournment Motion by: Seconded:	
12. Action Items Place Holder	



SEAC Committee Meeting Minutes

Date& Time:	September 3, 2025, 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 1, 2025 @ 6:00 pm
Committee Members: Kim Murphy, Amanda Hennig, Cindy Benedetti, Karen Applebee, Laura Shoemaker, Jeanne Gravelle, Monica Wenzlaff, Bob Sikora, Conrad Stanley	
Administrative Officials: Gerald Foran, Erin Lemak	
Regrets: Amanda Henning	

1. Opening Prayer Welcome	Erin Lemak
2. Approval of Agenda Motion by: Jeanne Gravelle Seconded: Laura Shoemaker	
3. Declared Pecuniary Interest N/A	
4. Approval of the June minutes: Motion by: Monica Wenzlaff Seconded: Bob Sikora	
5. School System Operational Business 5.1. Professional Development Plan for the Year ➤ Special Education Teachers and Support Staff PD this year ➤ Special Education Teacher hiring process updated Q&A 5.2 Summer Boost and Transition Update ➤ Update on the programs Q&A	E. Lemak G. Foran
6. Ministry Updates (10 min) 6.1. Special Education Plan Checklist Update Q&A 6.2 Education and Community Partnership Program (ECP) Funding Update Q&A	G. Foran G. Foran/E. Lemak
7. SEAC Committee Functions: 7.1. SEAC Presentation Topics Review	G. Foran
8. Policy Advice to the Board N/A	



9. Updates	
9.1. Trustee Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Trustee Sicora shared Trustee updates.	
9.2. WRFN Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Kaleidoscope Kids – dates are set through December. FLYER➤ School Navigation Workshop Series FLYER<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The first workshop was held in mid-August. It was well attended and well received, allowing parents/caregivers an opportunity to also connect with and support each other.○ We are also planning an IEP Overview workshop in partnership with WCDsb and WRDSB – just waiting on a confirmed date – likely later in September. This would be different than the session WRFN is offering in mid-October.○ WRFN Camp Day – Sunday, September 28 in partnership with the YMCA of Three Rivers at Camp Ki-Wa-Y. We are excited to share that the registration is full. This is an event where families can enjoy participating in camp activities and meeting other families. It typically fills up within two days of first promoting.	
9.3. Autism Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Autism Ontario September 2025 Updates	
9.4. WWDSS Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Join us on Sunday, September 28th, 2025, for the annual WWDSS Any Which Way You Can A-Thon! AWWYCA Schedule of Events:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 1:00-2:00pm Registration, face painting, balloon twisting and outdoor fun○ 2:00-2:20pm Opening ceremonies○ 2:20-3:00pm Any Which Way You Can A-thon 2km walk and roll around Waterloo Park○ 3:00-4:00pm Refreshments, Announcements, and Entertainment by Erick Traplin➤ WWDSS Speech & Music Social Groups will be running again this year in Waterloo Wellington region	
10. Pending Items N/A	
11. Adjournment Motion by: Kim Murphy Seconded: Jeanne Gravelle	
12. Action Items Place Holder N/A	



Date: October 1, 2025
To: SEAC
From: Director of Education, Superintendent of Learning: Program Services
Subject: AI-How Can It Help Our Students

Type of Report:

- ☐ Decision-Making
- ☐ Monitoring
- ☒ Incidental Information concerning day-to-day operations

Type of Information:

- ☐ Information for Board of Trustees Decision-Making
- ☐ Monitoring Information of Board Policy **XX XXX**
- ☒ Information only of day-to-day operational matters delegated to the CEO

Origin: (cite Education Act and/or Board Policy or other legislation)

Regulation 306 Special Education Programs and Services

Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:

Policy 1001 - Ends

Special Education Plan:

Pg.

Alignment to the MYSP:

☒ **Awaken to Belong**

- ☒ Every student can see themselves reflected in their learning.
- ☐ Staff experiences a positive, healthy, and inclusive workplace.
- ☐ Are aware of and/or use the available resources to assist in navigation of the school system.

☒ **Ignite to Believe**

- ☒ Every student experiences the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs) and the WCDSB pastoral plan within their learning environments.
- ☐ Staff are welcomed and invited to continue to be a partner in their adult faith formation journey.
- ☐ The relationship between home, parish and school is strengthened.

☒ **Strengthen to Become**



- ☒ Every student reaches their full potential.
- ☒ Staff see their impact on student achievement.
- ☐ Are engaged as active partners in our students' Catholic education journey.

Background/Comments:

Executive Summary



At WCDSB, we are committed to exploring how school approved- AI tools can support students with special education needs. Our work highlights the vision for inclusive use of AI, concrete supports using Microsoft Copilot and Wayground, the connection to Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and the importance of safety, privacy, ethics, and limitations. Draft Parent Guidelines and Student Guidelines have also been developed for review and feedback. SEAC input will be an important step in shaping district direction.

AI has the potential to reduce barriers, increase access, and build confidence for diverse learners. These supports are supplemental and do not replace teachers, individualized education plans, therapies, or relationships.

Purpose and Objectives

WCDSB's purpose in introducing AI is to equip families and educators with tools that enhance accessibility, inclusion, and student independence. Our objectives are to explain the role of AI as an accessibility and learning support, demonstrate how Copilot and Wayground align with needs in reading, writing, executive functioning, and engagement, connect this work to UDL principles, present the system's current status and path forward, and invite feedback on the Parent and Student Guidelines.

Vision: AI for Inclusion and Independence

Artificial Intelligence should be understood as a set of digital tools that can provide support. For students with special education needs, these supports can scaffold access to curriculum, personalize learning, and build independence. AI can help students find their voice, overcome barriers, and participate more fully in learning. WCDSB's vision is to integrate AI carefully and inclusively, keeping equity and belonging at the center. At the same time, AI is not a substitute for teachers, educational assistants, therapies, or relationships. Educators make individualized decisions about students.

Universal Design for Learning and AI

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is the practice of designing instruction so that all students can access and participate in learning. AI aligns naturally with UDL principles.

Through multiple means of representation AI can simplify text, summarize passages, explain vocabulary, and provide visuals or audio supports.

Through multiple means of action and expression, AI can offer sentence starters, graphic organizers, checklists, alternate formats, and language supports.

Through multiple means of engagement, tools such as Wayground can provide interactive content, choice, and step-by-step guidance that matches a student's pace and interests. In this way, AI strengthens inclusion by meeting students where they are and offering varied pathways to success.

Tools Available at WCDSB



At WCDSB, the Generative Artificial Intelligence tools currently available to students are Microsoft Copilot and Wayground. These are board approved platforms introduced with care and in alignment with the WCDSB AI Guidelines for teachers, students, and parents. Copilot supports reading, writing, organization, and study strategies. It can help students summarize and rephrase texts, draft outlines, generate checklists, and scaffold writing. Wayground provides teacher created and AI enhanced interactive videos with embedded questions, allowing students to practice, review, and receive feedback in an engaging way. These tools represent initial steps toward integrating AI in classrooms in ways that support inclusion and student learning.

Special Education Use Cases and Scenarios

The practical application of AI can be seen most clearly in scenarios tied to student needs. For reading and comprehension, Copilot can simplify an article into key points, define unfamiliar words, and generate comprehension questions. For writing and idea generation, Copilot can provide sentence starters, outlines, and quick checks of conventions, helping students get started with confidence. For executive functioning, it can create step-by-step plans, time estimates, and checklists to support task initiation and completion. For vocabulary development, it can generate student friendly definitions and example sentences. For engagement, Wayground provides interactive videos with built in practice opportunities. For students needing alternate formats, AI can rephrase at different reading levels, provide text-to-speech or speech-to-text, and offer visual summaries. Each of these examples demonstrates how AI can provide scaffolds that align with individual education goals and support learner independence.

Safety, Privacy, Ethics, and Limitations

A critical component of AI use in education is ensuring safety, privacy, and ethical practices. At WCDSB, we follow our AI Guidelines for teachers, students, and parents to ensure responsible and transparent use. Privacy is a priority: students are required to exclude private, sensitive, or identifying details in prompts. Accuracy is also a concern, as AI tools can produce errors or “hallucinations.” For this reason, students are taught to verify information, crosscheck with original texts, and consult teachers when needed. AI also raises questions of academic integrity, as it can assist with planning, drafting, and summarizing, but students’ own thinking and voice remain essential. Finally, AI is not an intervention and will not replace professional supports; it is a scaffold to assist learning.

Where We Are at WCDSB

Currently, Microsoft Copilot and Wayground are available for educators and students. Draft guidelines for teachers, students, and parents have been developed to provide clarity on appropriate use. Professional learning is ongoing, with educators receiving examples and models of how AI can be applied to support inclusion and student success. Implementation is gradual and feedback driven, with pilot examples emerging from classrooms. This measured approach ensures that AI is introduced thoughtfully, aligned with student needs and system goals.

Family Partnership and Feedback

Family partnership is central to WCDSB’s approach. Parents will receive draft Parent Guidelines and Student Guidelines for review and feedback. Their perspectives will be essential in shaping how AI supports are integrated and communicated. Feedback will be used to refine guidelines, improve examples, and ensure that supports are aligned with family expectations. SEAC’s role is especially valuable in reflecting the experiences and needs of families of students with exceptionalities.

Conclusion

With board approved tools, clear guidelines, and a focus on inclusion, AI offers opportunities to reduce barriers and support diverse learners. The work is guided by principles of safety, equity, and thoughtful implementation. The voice of families and SEAC members will play a key role in shaping next steps, ensuring that AI use is grounded in the needs of students and supportive of their growth and independence.

Recommendation:

Presented for your information.

Prepared/Reviewed By: Annalisa Varano
Director of Education
Gerald Foran
Superintendent of Learning: Special Education

*4.2 DIRECTOR Monitoring Reports: Where the Board receives from the CEO a monitoring report that flows from a responsibility delegated to the Director under Board Policy – except where approval is required by the Board on a matter delegated by policy to the Board – the minutes of the Meeting at which the Report is received shall expressly provide that the Board has received and approved of the Report as an action consistent with the authority delegated to the CEO, subject in all instances to what otherwise actually occurred.