

Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting (SEAC)
Virtual
January 21, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Chairperson:	Traci Clarke, Inclusion Action Ontario
Trustees:	Trustee Sandra Moore Trustee Luka Luketic-Buyers
Committee:	Erica Thrift Caird, SEAC Co-Chair, Autism Ontario Davina Mullaley, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Group of Ottawa Dawn Pickering, OPVIC formally VIEWS Catherine Holmes, Community Member at Large Laura Haller, Down Syndrome Association Betsy Schuurman, Association for Bright Children Kerry Monaghan, Community Member at Large Leanne Keddle, Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario Afshan Jeoffrey, (Alternate) Autism Ontario
Members Absent:	Vicki Kotow, (Alternate) Down Syndrome Association Trustee Scott Phelan, (Alternate) Trustee Cindy Simpson (Alternate) Adrienne Charlton, (Alternate), Association for Bright Children Antonio Giamberardino, (Alternate) Learning Disabilities of Ontario Erinn Ladouceur, (Alternate) IAO Helen McRobbie, (Alternate), OPVIC
Administration:	Nicola Benton, Superintendent, Special Education & Student Services Michelle Kisil, Coordinator, Special Education & Student Services Jennifer Prichett, Principal, Special Education & Student Services
Recording:	Ley Kunze, Executive Assistant, Special Education & Student Services
Guests:	Michelle McGarry, Principal, Leadership and Parent Engagement Cori Pinault, Principal, Holy Trinity High School Donna Mailloux, OCSB Research Officer Angele Desbois, OCSB Psychology Lead Joanne LaSciazza, OCSB Educational Consultant, Special Education and Student Services Susan Muleme Kasumba, Parent

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL: The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

NOMINATIONS and ELECTIONS: Nominations for SEAC Chair and Vice Chair positions were received for the January 2026 - December 2026 term. Traci Clarke was elected Chair, and Erica Thrift Caird was elected Vice Chair. Both were acclaimed.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Michelle Kisil

PRAYER/REFLECTION: Jennifer Prichett

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION: Moved by Erica Thrift Caird, seconded by Dawn Pickering,
THAT the Agenda of January 21, 2026 be approved.

CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION: Moved by Davina Mullaley, seconded by Trustee Moore,
THAT the Minutes of December 17, 2025 be approved.

CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

PRESENTATIONS:

[Student Census](#) - Michelle McGarry, Principal, Leadership and Parent Engagement
 Cori Pinault, Principal, Holy Trinity High School
 Donna Mailoux, OCSB Research Officer

- Last census was in spring of 2022
- Must be held every five years
- Being held after four years because of previous low participation rate
- Can opt out, questions can be skipped
- Parent info sessions will be held
- Survey is not anonymous
- Board Researchers are the only people to see data linked to identifiers
- Data will be stripped of identifiers in one year
- Survey info helps plan programs and services that support student success
- Understand language, cultural, and identity needs in our schools
- Improve resources for students with diverse backgrounds.
- Guide equity and inclusion work
- Identify areas where additional support is needed; and
- Create schools where every student feels safe, welcome, and included

Q&A

- *Will the student census data be linked to academic measures, including IEP status and the specific accommodations or modifications in the IEPs, in order to compare the outcomes of students with and without IEPs?*
 - *Yes, the student census data is planned to be merged with academic measures, including suspensions, IEP data, and report cards, after the initial board and family of schools reports are created. This is a significant undertaking, and we anticipate having the merged data within the year.*

- *Is there a way we can combine the information from the student census and the climate survey to get more information?*
 - *The two surveys have different purposes and different rules around them. The PPM for the climate survey says that it must remain anonymous. We are not allowed to link it in any way to any student identities. That survey always has to go out separate from this one.*
- *When we talk about the census, it's the same kind of ideas as we would be dealing with the census for ICanada for example? So we're talking demographics, information, who people are, where they come from, that kind of thing?*
 - *That's correct. So, it maps the same kind of wording that's in Stats Canada, just not as comprehensive, according to the Ministry.*
- *Will the student census data be cross-tabulated with academic measures, such as IEP status, to ensure programs are appropriately targeted for students with special education needs?*
 - *Absolutely, but we will be doing all sorts of different cross tabs and a lot of those will be generated by what the community needs, what our school community needs. If you have specific questions, it would be great for me to start taking a look at what are the needs for special education, what are the needs for SEAC, because that can drive some of the questions that I'm able to ask.*
- *The accessibility of things, what format is this done in?*
 - *The survey is created on Qualtrics which is compatible with all the Google read and write. We will keep testing, using other platforms.*
- *How are students in Grade 4 and up children who are not necessarily able to verbalize or communicate accommodated for the student census?*
 - *For students in grades 4 to 12 who are unable to complete the confidential census themselves, teachers have instructions to send the survey home, allowing a parent to assist with completion, provided the student consents.*

Evolving Role of School Psychology - Angele Desbois, Psychology Lead, OCSB

- Presentation focus within the literacy arena
- Focused on aligning with the Right to Read recommendations and
- Ensuring equitable distribution of psychological services
- Involves adopting the Multi-Tier System of Support (MTSS) framework
- Shifting from static psychological assessments to incorporating progress monitoring and dynamic assessments
- Identifies gaps in progression
- Presented real data demonstrating how dynamic assessment, using tools like Dibbles to measure early literacy skills like decoding, can identify students who are responding positively to intervention
- Dynamic assessment process allows for refining programming variables such as intervention frequency, group size, or the intervention itself
- Ensures students are making adequate progress

Q&A

- *What is the ultimate goal of the dynamic assessment (e.g., closing the academic gap), and how is a satisfactory rate of student growth defined? What is the timeline for rolling out this new assessment process to all students, and will professional development be provided to all classroom teachers?*
 - *The implementation is a work in progress and focuses on building capacity across all disciplines and educators, utilizing the assessment framework for literacy and other domains also.*
 - *The department is collaborating with Student Success, and curriculum to intervene far upstream, which includes teacher mentorship, and the data is prompting teachers to seek more support for students not making satisfactory gains.*
- *How long do you see this potentially taking?*
 - *The original Right to Read and all of the recommendations came out in 2022. Two years later the report card said we're making a lot of gains in a lot of areas. Notably changes in curriculum are very positive. We can only move as fast as the financial support comes. Also we are doing a lot of work well ahead of a lot of boards.*
- *How does dynamic assessment affect psychoeducational assessments at transition points?*
 - *The dynamic assessment data is collected year-round and follows students as they move between grades, making the assessment "more surgical" by focusing on measurable skill clusters. This provides the next teacher with actionable data on a student's measurable gains, unlike traditional fixed-point psychoeducational assessments.*
- *Practically everyone I know with a psych ed not done with the school board, all done privately, this information was assessed by SLPs (Speech Language Pathologists) and the Psychologists then incorporated that into their recommendations. So, just if we could just back it up. So, you're the psychology lead. You are assessing literacy.*
 - *The school psychologist's role is shifting to proactively address dyslexia and other learning difficulties by using screening tools to "go upstream," identify students at risk, and provide early intervention to close achievement gaps.*
 - *The focus is moving from individual psychological assessments to a systemic approach, applying assessment and measurement expertise to evaluate the academic health of an entire school or class.*
- *Is this a mandate from the Government or is this something that the Board is doing "extra"?*
 - *The part that's mandated is the universal screening for literacy. The K to 2 new curriculum roll out would be province wide. We are above and beyond especially grades three to eight, where it's not mandated. Teachers have been absolutely phenomenal in collecting information that they're not mandated to. There's a lot more interconnectedness and the collaboration has been so good for the kids.*

The Chairperson thanked the presenters for their presentations

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT: Traci Clarke [Report](#)

- Lisa Schimmens, Associate Director of Business Affairs is presenting at the February meeting
- Budget input collaboration with CSPA/PIC again
- CSPA working on a survey and will share
- Presenting to the Board on March 24
- Second focus group will be on February 11
- Forty people have signed up so far
- Information will be shared on social media and with schools
- Three volunteers are needed to help out
- Davina and Dawn volunteered

Q&A

- None

[BOARD REPORT](#): Nicola Benton, Trustee Luka Luketic-Buyers

- Trustee Sandra Moore - EQAO results announced
- Jr and primary results in reading were excellent
- Above provincial averages
- Teachers are doing great work

DEPARTMENT UPDATE:**a.) Superintendent Nicola Benton****Inclusive Practices Project:**

- Creating safe and inclusive schools to promote school attendance
- Involves the entire Special Education and Student Services Department
- Led by Justine Ogle, Social Work Lead, and her staff of social workers
- Working with a select number of schools
- Schools who have identified increasing attendance and student engagement in their SAP (Student Achievement Plan)
- Supporting schools through the Attendance Strategy and toolkits that have been developed
- Helping schools to reach their goals
- Building capacity, working with the schools to address chronic non-attendance
- Will share the results at the end of the year
- Project will continue next year as well

Q&A

- None

b.) Michelle Kisil, Coordinator of Special Education and Student Services

- [Special Education Report](#) Chapters 12 - 15
- Chapter 12 - Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies

- OCSB identifies child needs based on Ministry of Education PPM #11.1.
- Assessment is continuous, starting at enrollment or after Kindergarten, and involves parents/guardians.
- Year 1 Kindergarten teachers use a speech and language checklist.
- Parents can contact "First Words" pre-school.
- OCSB uses the Intervention Model (Classroom Teacher, School Collaborative Team, Special Education and Student Services Team stages) to document and plan interventions.
- Formal assessments (SLP, Psychologist, or Behaviour Analyst/Consultant) require parental consent.
- **Chapter 13 - Educational and Other Assessments**
- Teacher assessment starts the evaluation process.
- Formal, individualized assessments by qualified professionals determine learning profiles and inform IEP adjustments.
- Psychological assessments aid educational planning.
- Speech-language assessments evaluate communication concerns (language, articulation, stuttering, voice) and recommend interventions.
- Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing regularly evaluate students receiving direct service.
- Social work assessments focus on social-emotional strengths and needs within systemic contexts (family, school, community).
- Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) assessments review skills and may include Functional Behaviour Assessments (FBA) to reduce challenging behavior.
- **Chapter 14 - Coordination of Services with Other Ministries or Agencies**
- Transitioning to elementary school for students with individual needs requires careful planning and information sharing among home, school, and professionals.
- Community professionals are encouraged to share relevant reports, with parental permission, to assist a child's school transition.
- The OCSB coordinates transitions back to the community school from ECPPs (e.g., Day Treatment) with a formal case conference and a designated "Navigator."
- **Chapter 15 - Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings**
- Covers specialized health support services in schools, which extend beyond regular preventative health programs.
- The responsibility for providing these services during school hours is shared among the OCSB, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Community and Social Services.
- CHEO School-Based Rehabilitation Services (SBRS) assesses needs and provides services like nursing, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy, as outlined in PPM 81.
- Scheduled health support services (e.g., suctioning, tube feeding, lifting) required for a student to attend school are recorded in their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

SEAC members made suggestions for editing and clarification.

NEW BUSINESS:

- None

ASSOCIATION & COMMITTEE REPORTS: Links Provided

- [CSPA](#)
- [Central Committees](#)

Traci Clarke

NOTICE OF MOTIONS:

- None

ENQUIRIES: [Responses](#)

- Submission to SEAC Chair required minimum of one week prior to the meeting

INFORMATION: None**ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION: Moved by Davina Mullaley, seconded by Trustee Moore
THAT the meeting be adjourned at 7:52 pm

CARRIED

Next meeting: February 18, 2026