

AGENDA

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, January 22, 2025, 7:00 p.m.

Boardroom, Catholic Education Centre

***Mission:** Disciples of Christ, nurturing mind, body, and soul to the fullness of life.*

***Vision:** Changing the world through Catholic education.*

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3. Special Education Review Update: L. Pincente	
4. Entry Planning and Transition for Students with Differing Abilities Information Session: K. Boily	
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February 19, 2025	

March 19, 2025

April 23, 2025

May 21, 2025

June 11, 2025

J. Adjournment

OPENING PRAYER

We have been given the gift of time:
a whole year to make a difference
in the lives of other people.

A whole year to grow in faith.

A whole year to make peace and
justice a reality.

A whole year to create, to love, to
grow.

Thank you, God, for this gift of time.
Help us to use it wisely and to
remember that the gift of this time
comes but once.

+Amen

Land Acknowledgement

We are here to pay respect and recognize that this is the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations, and we are here because this land was occupied. In recognizing that this space occupies colonized First Nations territories, and out of respect for the rights of Indigenous people, it is our collective responsibility to recognize our colonial histories and present-day implications and honour, protect and sustain this land.



Student Artist: Thea-St. Bonaventure

MINUTES

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

Catholic Education Centre, Chapel and Room 301

Attendees:	Bruno Iannicca	Trustee - Chair
	Dely Farrace	Brampton Caledon Community Living - Vice Chair - Representative
	Caroline Huxtable	Epilepsy South Central Ontario - Representative
	Christine Koczmar	Community Living Mississauga - Representative
	Sandra Roiati	OECTA Secondary Representative
	Sheena Tennessee	Member at Large, Central Committee for Catholic School Councils
Regrets:	Luz del Rosario	Alternate Chair
	Thomas Thomas	Alternate Trustee
	Airene Cunanan	Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter - Alternative
	Myra Del Rosario	ABC Association for Bright Children - Representative
	Liza Dowson	Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders - Representative
	Janice Hatton	Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter - Representative
	Lisa Papaloni	Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region - Representative
	Shanna Walsh	Down Syndrome Assoc. of Peel: Caring Network - Alternative
	Pam Boniferro	Dufferin-Peel Educational Resource Workers' Association - Alternative
	Paula Dametto-Giovannozzi	Alternate Trustee
	Eva Akinsara	Down Syndrome Association of Peel
	Jamie Philip	OECTA Elementary Alternative
Staff:	Teresa Abbruscato	Consultant, Special Education and Learning Services
	Katherine Cordi	Consultant, Special Education and Learning Services
	Joanne Dean	Chief, Speech/Language/Hearing/Vision
	Tanya Galway	Chief, Psychology
	Pina Grosso	Chief, Social Work
	Christiane Kyte	General Manager, Clinical Services and Spec Education
	Cristine Pergotski	Association of Professional Student Services Personnel
	Laura Pincente	Coordinator, Secondary Transitions and Diverse Learners
	Jacqueline Toste	Consultant, Diverse Learning Needs
	Katherine Magee	Executive Assistant, Special Education and Learning Services - Recorder
	Lucy Papaloni	Superintendent, Special Education and Learning Services
	Kristie Boily	Consultant, Special Education and Learning Services
	Alexandra Lawrence	Coordinator, Special Education and Learning Services
	Eliane Moniz-Baptista	Coordinator, Special Education and Learning Services
	Ruba Jeorgy	DPERWA Representative
	Gemma Rea	Consultant, Special Education and Learning Services
	Gina Renda	Secondary Principal/VP Representative
	Jessica Lim	Consultant, Special Education and Learning Services

A. Routine Matters

1. Advent Liturgy in CEC Chapel
2. Call to Order and Attendance in Room 301
Chair of SEAC, Bruno Iannicca, called the meeting to order at 7:05p.m.
3. Land Acknowledgment - Superintendent Papaloni's daughter
4. Approval of Agenda - D. Farrace

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

5. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, November 20, 2024 - C. Huxtable

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING, NOVEMBER 20, 2024, BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

6. Previous Business - Nil

B. Presentations and Staff Reports

1. Gifted Information Event Update: J. Toste
Superintendent Papaloni introduced J. Toste, Consultant, Special Education. J. Toste provided information on the Gifted Information event on January 29th, 2025. The virtual event helps provide an overview for identifying students.

C. Budget

Trustee Bruno Iannicca mentioned the Public Budget Meeting for all parents will be on April 24th, 2025. This is an annual meeting.

D. Reports from Trustees for Receipt

Trustee Bruno Iannicca wished everyone a Merry Christmas on behalf of the Board of Trustees and the staff of the Special Education Advisory Committee.

Trustee Bruno Iannicca also mentioned the Nativity Night at St. Timothy's on Monday, December 16th. The activity is for the community to enjoy.

E. Information/Reports from Community Associations - Nil

F. Information and Correspondence

1. Letter from Limestone District School Board SEAC to Linda Lacroix, Office of the Register, OCT
Superintendent Papaloni discussed the letter from the Special Education Advisory Committee for Limestone District School Board. The Limestone School Board is having difficulty finding qualified Special Education teachers. Superintendent Papaloni explained that Dufferin-Peel CDSB does not have this same problem. DP has many qualified Special Education teachers. In addition, the Ministry provides funding for Special Education AQ courses which are rapidly claimed each time they are offered.

G. Communication - Nil

H. Questions Asked by Committee Members

C. Koczmaro asked the time of the Budget meeting in April. Trustee Bruno Iannicca answered that the time of the meeting has not been set up yet, but he will communicate it as soon as it becomes available.

I. Future Meetings

January 22, 2025
February 19, 2025
March 19, 2025
April 23, 2025
May 21, 2025
June 11, 2025

J. Adjournment

Moved by C. Koczmaro

THAT THE MEETING BE ADJOURNED AT 7:18P.M.

CARRIED

Special Education Advisory Committee (S.E.A.C.) - 2023

CHAIR:	Bruno Iannicca
VICE-CHAIR:	Dely Farrace
RESOURCE STAFF:	PRIMARY: Superintendent of Special Education and Learning Services L. Papaloni
	ADDITIONAL: Superintendent of Schools B. Diogo
COMMITTEE MEMBERS:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>The Committee shall be made up of one (1) representative of the local (Ont. Reg. 464/97) associations, not to exceed twelve (12), in the area of jurisdiction of the Board, as nominated by the local association and appointed by the Board. One alternate for each representative appointed from the local associations as nominated by the local association and appointed by the Board.</i><i>Two members from among the Board's own members as appointed by the Board.</i><i>One alternate for each of the Board's members as appointed by the Board;</i><i>One or more additional members as appointed by the Board who are neither representatives of a local association nor members of the Board or another committee of the Board.</i>
TRUSTEES:	B. Iannicca, Chair; P. Dametto-Giovannozzi, Trustee Representative, L. del Rosario, (Alternate), T. Thomas (Alternate)
OTHERS:	<i>Special Education Administration, General Manager of Clinical Services and Special Education, Chiefs of Service, Senior Child & Youth Practitioner, Coordinators, Consultants, one representative from each of: Principal/Vice Principal Associations, Elementary & Secondary, OECTA Elementary, OECTA Secondary, Dufferin-Peel Educational Resource Worker Association, APSSP (Association of Professional Student Services Personnel).</i>
MONITORING:	Associate Director, Instructional Services

TERMS OF REFERENCE

(Ont. Reg. 464/97, from The Education Act)

The committee will:

- (1) make recommendations to the Board in respect of any matter affecting the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the Board;
- (2) participate in the Board's annual review, under Ont. Reg. 306/90 of the Special Education Plan;
- (3) participate in the Board's annual budget process under Section 231 of the Act, as that process relates to special education; and
- (4) review the financial statements of the Board, prepared under Section 252 of the Act, as those statements relate to special education.

REPORTS TO:	The Board
MEETINGS:	Usually once a month on the first Wednesday following Faith and Program Committee Meeting, September to June – 7:00 p.m.

DATE

Via Email

Hon. Jill Dunlop Ministry of Education

Re: Inadequate Special Education Funding & Educational Assistant Shortage

Dear Minister Dunlop,

We are writing on behalf of the special education students in Ontario's schools to express our serious concerns regarding the significant challenges facing these students. Specifically, the insufficient funding for special education programs and services in combination with the critical shortage of Educational Assistants (EAs) severely impact the quality of education and support provided to exceptional students. These act as barriers to these students' rights, as per the Human Rights Code, to access education. Furthermore, the lack of adequate funding for special education has ramifications negatively impacting the entire student population in Ontario, as further explained below.

Funding Challenges:

- **Special Education Grant Shortfalls:** The current Special Education Grant is insufficient to meet the complex and diverse needs of exceptional students. This chronic underfunding forces school boards to reallocate resources from other areas, therefore compromising the overall educational experience for all students. As an example, the Ottawa Catholic School Board currently spends \$26 million more than it is funded to support students with special education needs. This financial strain limits the board's ability to provide essential services and support to its students. **Inadequate Transportation Funding:** Transportation costs for students with special needs continue to exceed the funding provided by the Ministry. This shortfall places an additional burden on school boards and families of students who require specialized transportation and acts as a barrier to access education, which is a human right.

Educational Assistant Shortages:

- **Critical Staffing Gaps:** The province is facing a severe shortage of qualified Education Assistants. This shortage results in significant challenges in providing consistent and adequate support to students with special education needs. Staff absences due to illness and stress often cannot be filled, leaving vulnerable students without the necessary assistance and supervision. This situation poses a direct risk to the safety and well-being of these students and disrupts the learning environment for all students in our schools across the province. This lack of support denies special needs students their legally protected right to access the same level of education as their peers without disabilities. **Students unable to access educational institutions:** A lack of appropriate staff and support can also result in requests to keep students at home. Results from [People for Education's 2023-2024 Annual Ontario School Survey](#) showed that 72% of elementary schools who had daily EA shortages recommended that students receiving EA support stay home and 67% of secondary schools did the same. Note that the province does not keep its own statistics of school exclusion.

- **Urgent Need for Action:** The Ministry must take immediate steps to address this crisis. We urge the government to increase the special education grant to an amount that ensures exceptional students have equitable access to education, when compared to their typical peers. This amount must be adjusted for inflation each year. Furthermore, we urge the government to implement strategies to attract and retain staff in the area of special education. These strategies could include:
 - **Free Tuition for EA Programs:** Offering free tuition for students enrolled in Educational Assistant programs at Ontario colleges.
 - **Retention Bonuses:** Providing financial incentives to encourage EAs to remain in the education sector.
 - **Living wage and benefits:** Most EAs salary is not sufficient to cover the basic cost of living, with an average salary of \$49 000 per year, despite the essential work they do in supporting exceptional students.
 - **Enhanced Professional Development:** Investing in ongoing professional development opportunities for EAs to enhance their skills and knowledge.
 - **Improved Working Conditions:** Addressing workload concerns and ensuring that EAs have the necessary resources and support to effectively perform their roles.
 - **Stable Employment:** Many EAs leave the profession due to lack of full-time stable positions and some are forced to take on multiple jobs to make ends meet. Providing stable funding to pay for full-time positions will enable schools to retain the best EAs and result in lower costs over time when compared to the cost of constantly having to re-staff and retrain new EAs.
 - **Increase and improve all special education resources:** Speech and Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Behaviour Analysts, Resource Teachers and other specialists are wholly insufficient in number to meet the needs of the current student population in the province - significant effort must be expended to improve children's access to the services these specialists bring to the classrooms of the province

The current situation is unsustainable and demands urgent attention. We are facing a special education crisis in Ontario, with students not having their human right of equitable access to quality education met at this time. As such, as chairs of the Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs) across Ontario, we are asking that you take immediate action to address these critical funding and staffing challenges to ensure that all students in Ontario, including those with special needs, have access to the equitable and high quality education and support to which they are entitled under the Human Rights Code.

Sincerely,

Traci Clarke SEAC Chair Ottawa Catholic School Board