

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members Present

Linda Morrice (Chair) - Pathstone Mental Health, Brianne Freiwat – Bethesda Services, Flavia Orvitz - Autism Ontario – Niagara Chapter, Patty Ferrie – Inclusion West Niagara, Barb Wilson-Inclusion Action in Ontario, Catharine Hodson - Niagara Children's Centre School Authority, Kathy Bell - Niagara Children's Centre, Tessa Alexander – VOICE for Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Katie McKay – Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Coalition.

Administration/Resource

Simon Hancox - Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-being, Terri Beck - Student Achievement Leader Special Education Elementary, Matt Ezrin – Student Achievement Leader Special Education Secondary, Tracey Krysa – Senior Manager Special Education, Elizabeth Klassen - Trustee, District School Board of Niagara, Shannon Mitchell - Trustee, District School Board of Niagara

Recording Secretary

Jennifer McGugan, Safe Schools and Student Well-Being Coordinator

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TERRITORY

Quorum was established and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. Chair Morrice opened the meeting with the Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Brianne Freiwat
Seconded by Pattie Ferrie

“That the Agenda dated March 12, 2026, be approved as presented.”

CARRIED

3. STUDENT VOICE

Matt Ezrin, Student Achievement Leader for Special Education - Secondary, presented a video highlighting a student with Down's Syndrome at Eden High School. The video shared how the student was initially nervous about the transition to secondary school, but through the support of the Secondary School to Community Program, he has adjusted well. He now enjoys meaningful friendships, participates actively in school activities, and benefits from the supportive environment and resources provided by the program.

4. SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF PRESENTATION

Milica Petkovic, DSBN Public Relations Manager, delivered a presentation outlining the process to enhance the accessibility of DSBN's public website for students, staff, and the wider community. With the growth of the board and the increasing volume of information available, a key focus is to remove barriers to access. This initiative is interdepartmental, involving departmental reviews and IT data to ensure alignment with web

accessibility guidelines. The website is being designed to meet the second level of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines international standard, enabling users to find and act on information quickly and easily. Importantly, input from all stakeholders—including staff, students, parents, and the community—is being actively sought throughout the process. The primary goals are to improve navigation, streamline content, and reinforce the board’s commitment to equity and inclusion.

5. SPECIAL EDUCATION REPORT

Superintendent Simon Hancox indicated that updates will be made to the Special Education section of the public website and highlighted the location of the Special Education Parent Guide on the site. He requested that the committee review sections of the guide and provide feedback regarding elements that are effective for families, areas lacking clarity, any missing components, and suggestions to enhance clarity, tone, and accessibility.

6. ASSOCIATION INFORMATION

Committee members shared information and updates from their respective associations and roles.

7. TRUSTEE UPDATE

Trustee Mitchell provided an update on the January Board meeting.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

Chair Morrice reported that DSBN SEAC received correspondence from the Durham District School Board SEAC, advocating for the Ontario government to retain elected trustees and uphold local governance. The committee recommended that DSBN SEAC proceed with drafting a letter to send to the Minister of Education.

9. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

In response to a question, Superintendent Hancox explained the protocol for reviewing Board committee minutes. Following each committee meeting, the minutes are presented to the Board at the subsequent meeting. As all trustees serving on committees are also members of the Board, any inaccuracies or omissions can be promptly identified and addressed during the Board meeting.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm

Next Meeting: April 9, 2026 – DSBN Education Centre, St. Catharines Room