

THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2026

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members Present

Michelle Toy - 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 (Acting Chair) - Niagara Children's Centre, Victoria Everett - Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region

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

Regrets

Tessa Alexander – VOICE for Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Katie McKay – Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Coalition.

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 5:32 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 Flavia Orvitz

Seconded by Pattie Ferrie

"That the Agenda dated April 9, 2026, be approved as presented."

CARRIED

3. STUDENT VOICE

Terri Beck, Student Achievement Leader for Special Education - Elementary, presented a video featuring a Senior Kindergarten student at Ferndale. The video illustrated the student's successful experience and demonstrated how the central Special Education Team collaborated with the school to facilitate a smooth transition to Grade 1.

4. SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF PRESENTATION

Matt Ezrin, Student Achievement Leader for Special Education - Secondary, and Nick Smith, Transition Navigator, delivered a presentation on the transition navigator role, which facilitates student transitions throughout the DSBN, including progression between grades, schools, and entry into post-secondary or community pathways. The Transition Navigator's initiatives are designed to promote coordinated, student-focused transition planning that actively involves both families and schools.

Teachers Andy Dermatis and Paul Ferrara presented a video and showcased highlights from the DSBN Special Olympics. SEAC was invited to review the winning entries from the DSBN Olympics T-Shirt Contest and vote on which Special Olympics cards should be developed from other outstanding art submissions. Additionally, two students from Sir Winston introduced the pilot Special Olympics Bocce Ball Tournament scheduled for May, which will involve nine elementary schools and more than 100 student participants.

5. **ASSOCIATION INFORMATION**

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

6. **TRUSTEE UPDATE**

Trustee Klassen provided an update on the March Board meeting.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE**

Moved by Pattie Ferrie

Seconded by Kathy Bell

“That the letter from the District School Board of Niagara SEAC to the Ministry be received and sent as written.”

CARRIED

Acting Chair Kathy Bell presented a draft letter from the DSBN SEAC to the Ministry, which was prepared in response to correspondence from the Durham District School Board SEAC. The letter highlights the positive relationship between DSBN and its trustees. The committee approved sending the letter as written.

8. **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

There were no questions.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Next Meeting: May 14, 2026 – DSBN Education Centre, St. Catharines Room