

THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members Present

Michelle Toy - Pathstone Mental Health, , Flavia Orvitz - Autism Ontario – Niagara Chapter, Patty Ferrie – Inclusion West Niagara, Tessa Alexander – VOICE for Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Barb Wilson-Inclusion Action in Ontario, Catharine Hodson - Niagara Children's Centre School Authority, Kathy Bell (Acting Chair) - Niagara Children's Centre, Cynthia Nyaundi and Leya Poulouski - NSS-NTEC.

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,

Regrets

Brianne Freiwat – Bethesda Services
Shannon Mitchell - Trustee, District School Board of Niagara
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 5:36 p.m. Acting Chair, Kathy Bell, opened the meeting with the Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Tessa Alexander
Seconded by Flavia Orvitz

"That the Agenda dated May 14, 2026, be approved as presented."

CARRIED

3. STUDENT VOICE

Terri Beck, Student Achievement Leader for Special Education – Elementary, presented a video featuring a Grade 6 student at Greendale Public School. The video highlighted the student's successful use of blind/low vision supports and assistive technology. In addition to learning Braille and core subjects, the student is actively involved in setting his own goals and demonstrates exceptional adaptability at school.

4. SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF PRESENTATION

Director Pisek provided an update on changes to education in Ontario arising from Bill 101, including key legislative and policy changes and their implications for school boards, operations, and student learning. She noted that SEAC will remain unchanged and that boards are awaiting further direction from the Ministry of Education regarding implementation expectations. Director Pisek also advised that the Government of Ontario released the 2026–27 Budget and most recently the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario's Report on Special Education Needs, which can be found [here](#). More information will be shared at the June 18, 2026, SEAC meeting.

Superintendent Hancox announced that Terri Beck, Student Achievement Leader for Special Education – Elementary, will be transitioning to a school administrator role at a Fort Erie school, and that Catherine Hodson will be returning to DSBN as Student Achievement Leader for Special Education – Elementary. He also provided a brief overview of the upcoming the Introduction to Special Education for Kindergarten Families Webinar and directed the committee to look at the Special Education events page on the DSBN website for registration information for the webinar and the upcoming Transition Fair on May 20, 2026.

Matt Ezrin provided an update on the Transition Fair. There are several agencies participating and over 40 families registered. There will be two sessions, 1-3 pm and 4-6 pm. Momentum Choir will be performing at the event.

5. ASSOCIATION PRESENTATION

Cynthia Nyaundi and Leya Poulouski from Niagara Training and Employment Agency Inc. – Niagara Support Services provided an overview of the services offered by their agency.

6. ASSOCIATION INFORMATION

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

7. TRUSTEE UPDATE

Trustee Klassen provided an update on the April Board meeting.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence was received from both the Huron Superior Catholic District School Board and the Hastings Prince Edward District School Board and were shared with the committee.

9. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

In response to a question, Matt Ezrin provided an update on the Bocce Ball Tournament hosted by Westlane and Sir Winston Churchill Secondary Schools in partnership with Special Olympics Ontario. The events were held in May and involved the participation of 150 students. The SEAC committee requested that a DSBN Recognition Card be sent to acknowledge the DSBN staff and students who organized the event.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:52pm.

Next Meeting: June 18, 2026 – DSBN Education Centre, St. Catharines Room