

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 7, 2026, at 6:00pm

Hybrid Meeting: [Join the meeting](#)

In-Person: St. Francis Room (2nd Floor) Catholic Education Centre

Online:

WCDSB Mission Statement

*As disciples of Christ,
we educate and nurture hope
in all learners
to realize their full potential
to transform God's world.*

Co-chairs: Cindy Benedetti and Laura Shoemaker

MEMBERS

WCDSB Trustee - **Bob Sikora**

WCDSB Trustee – **Conrad Stanley**

Waterloo Regional Down Syndrome Society - **Kim Murphy**

Waterloo Regional Police - **Amanda Hennig**

Family and Children's Services of Waterloo Region - **Cindy Benedetti**

Waterloo Region Family Network – **Karen Applebee**

International Dyslexia Association Ontario - **Laura Shoemaker**

Autism Ontario - **Monica Wenzlaff**

Member at Large - **Jeanne Gravelle**



**Waterloo Catholic
District School Board**
Quality, Inclusive, Faith Based Education

35 Weber St. W., Unit A
Kitchener, ON, Canada N2H 3Z1
519-578-3660
info@wcdsb.ca



SEAC Committee Meeting Agenda

Date& Time:	January 7, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.
Location (Hybrid)	In-Person: St. Francis Room (2 nd Floor), Catholic Education Centre Online: Via Teams : Join the meeting
Next Meeting:	February 4, 2025 @ 5:15 pm
Committee Members: Kim Murphy, Amanda Hennig, Cindy Benedetti, Karen Applebee, Laura Shoemaker, Jeanne Gravelle, Monica Wenzlaff, Bob Sikora, Conrad Stanley	
Administrative Officials: Gerald Foran, Erin Lemak	

1. Opening Prayer Welcome	Erin Lemak
2. Approval of Agenda Motion by: Seconded:	
3. Declared Pecuniary Interest	
4. Approval of the December minutes: Motion by: Seconded:	
5. School System Operational Business 5.1. Community Transitions	E. Sutherland and F. Cruz
6. Ministry Updates (10 min)	
7. SEAC Committee Functions: 7.1. Letters to the Ministry (5 min) 7.2. Sacramental Kits Event (5 min)	Chair E. Lemak
8. Policy Advice to the Board	
9. Updates	
10. Pending Items	
11. Adjournment Motion by: Seconded:	
12. Action Items Place Holder	



SEAC Committee Meeting Minutes

Date& Time:	December 3, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.
Location (Hybrid)	In-Person: St. Francis Room (2 nd Floor), Catholic Education Centre Online: Via Teams : Join the meeting
Next Meeting:	January 7, 2025 @ 6:00 pm
Committee Members: Kim Murphy, Amanda Hennig, Cindy Benedetti, Karen Applebee, Laura Shoemaker, Jeanne Gravelle, Monica Wenzlaff, Bob Sikora, Conrad Stanley	
Regrets: Laura Shoemaker, Jeanne Gravelle	
Administrative Officials: Gerald Foran, Erin Lemak, Jeanne Gravelle	

1. Opening Prayer Welcome	Erin Lemak
2. Approval of Agenda Motion by: Karen Applebee Seconded: Amanda Hennig	
3. Declared Pecuniary Interest N/A	
4. Approval of the October minutes: Motion by: Bob Sikora Seconded: Amanda Hennig	
5. School System Operational Business 5.1. SAP (Student Achievement Plan) • Board SAP • School SAP – new this year Q&A 5.2. MAAP (Math Achievement Action Plan) • Summary of the 25-26 Report Q&A	J. Ritsma / K. Robers P. Leduc
6. Ministry Updates (10 min) N/A	
7. SEAC Committee Functions: 7.1. Letter of Support for Summer Spec Ed Funding (5 min) • Add the note about student achievement to the Summer Spec. Ed. Funding letter • Create an additional letter to advocate for Special Education Transition Navigator position to be added to core funds.	Chair



<p>7.2. Sacramental Kits Event (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Task list reviewed• Reminders to be sent out the week before and few days before the event.	E. Lemak
<p>8. Policy Advice to the Board N/A</p>	
<p>9. Updates</p> <p>9.1. Trustee Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trustees Sikora shared Trustee updates for the month of November. <p>9.2. WRFN Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transitions workshop FLYER• WRFN Focus Group for Parents/Caregivers - Community-Led needs Assessment FLYER• WRFN Annual Appeal is currently running until Dec 31. Please help us reach our goal of \$50,000 so we can continue to offer Family Resource Coach support free of charge to families. <p>9.3. Autism Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• December Updates <p>9.4. WRDSS Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Holiday party coming up December 6th <p>9.5. WCDSB Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop series for parents of students in Grades 7 or 8 in Ontario with learning disabilities or ADHD	
<p>10. Pending Items N/A</p>	
<p>11. Adjournment Motion by: Amanda Hennig Seconded: Kim Murphy</p>	
<p>12. Action Items Place Holder N/A</p>	



Date: January 7, 2026
To: Board of Trustees
From: Director of Education
Subject: Community Transition Support Worker/Special Education Transition Navigator Roles

Type of Report: Decision-Making
 Monitoring
 Incidental Information concerning day-to-day operations

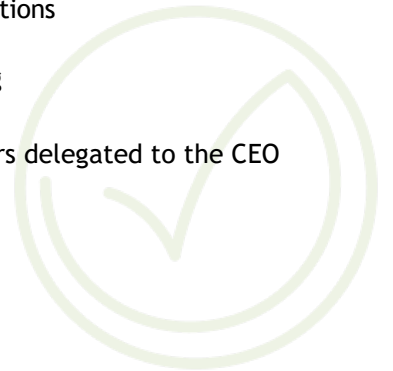
Type of Information: Information for Board of Trustees Decision-Making
 Monitoring Information of Board Policy XX XXX
 Information only of day-to-day operational matters delegated to the CEO

Origin: (cite Education Act and/or Board Policy or other legislation)
Regulation 306 Special Education Programs and Services

Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:
Policy 1001 - Ends

Alignment to the MYSP:

- Learning**
 - Support multiple pathways & tools for success
 - Accelerate excellence & innovation while building transferable, future-ready skills
 - Engage students as co-creators in their learning
 - Transform learning through leadership & staff support & development
- Serving**
 - Celebrate & promote our distinct Catholic identity
 - Develop faith & live gospel values
 - Strengthen connections between home, school, & parish
 - Connect faith formation to learning
- Belonging**
 - Create safe, welcoming environments that reflect our diversity
 - Promote a sense of mattering & dignity
 - Foster equitable, inclusive, & barrier-free learning & work environments
 - Engage families & build community partnerships



Background/Comments:

The Community Transition Support Worker provides transition support to students and families throughout the five high schools. Transition support includes familiarizing families, teachers, and students with the transition planning process, ensuring that students and families are provided with information about the range of services and programs that are available in the community that can support the student's transition out of high school, how to access those services, and ensuring that adult funding applications are completed for those who are eligible. This role works closely with the school team to assist in procuring community placements, experiential learning opportunities, and supported work experience placements through the Community Connections program. These experiences are important as they provide students and families with the opportunity to see what the variety of choices are as well as beginning to establish positive connections with community agencies that will continue post-secondary. Collaboration with community agencies also involves participating in committees such as the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Collaborative, presenting to families at Waterloo Region Family Network's Transition to Highschool Evening, and hosting the Beyond Graduation Information evening for families.

The Special Education Transition Navigator supports transition practices for students with special education needs and/or disabilities into, during and out of school. This role liaises and collaborates regularly with community agencies and organizations to support parents with accessing important resources, funding opportunities and programs. Collaboration with community agencies also includes committee membership and establishment of community partnerships.

The Special Education Transition Navigator supports families navigating and preparing for the transition from elementary to secondary school by sharing best practices, resources and tools that will help support successful transitions for students with special education needs and/or disabilities. This role collaborates with school teams and parents to plan the student's high school pathway, share transition resources, and guide families on adult funding opportunities, including required documentation for eligibility with the Ontario Disability Support Program and Developmental Services Ontario.

The Transition Navigators will share updates on referral numbers and work experience placements, as well as introduce new initiatives with the Community Connections Program, HeadStart, and Grade 8 Transition Nights. They will also highlight emerging trends in the developmental sector for both elementary and high School students.

Recommendation:

Presented for your information.

Prepared/Reviewed By: Annalisa Varano
Director of Education
Gerald Foran
Superintendent of Learning: Special Education
Erin Surtherland
Special Education Transition Navigator
Filomena Cruz
Community Transition Support Worker

*4.2 DIRECTOR Monitoring Reports: Where the Board receives from the CEO a monitoring report that flows from a responsibility delegated to the Director under Board Policy - except where approval is required by the Board on a matter delegated by policy to the Board - the minutes of the Meeting at which the Report is received shall expressly provide that the Board has received and approved of the Report as an action consistent with the authority delegated to the CEO, subject in all instances to what otherwise actually occurred.





Via email minister.edu@ontario.ca

The Honourable Paul Calandra Minister of
Education
438 University Ave 5th Floor
Toronto, ON, M5G 2K8

Dear Minister Calandra,

This letter is in response to a recommendation brought forward by the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB).

WCDSB is extremely grateful for the Responsive Education Program (REP) funding the Ministry of Education has provided school boards over the past **five** years for **Summer Learning for Students with Special Education Needs**. This funding has allowed for intentional programming with measurable gains for our most vulnerable learners within our schools.

More specifically, it has provided much-needed resources, transition programs, and additional staffing for students with special education needs over the summer months. Additionally, it has supported students with special education needs in transitioning successfully into their schools at the start of the new school year.

Furthermore, with this funding, WCDSB has been able to hire additional special education staff for existing summer learning programs which in turn has allowed for prioritizing registration for students who have an individual education plan (IEP). This is in alignment with the Ministry's current initiative to provide extra help and effective support for students with special education needs in order to better meet the provincial standards in reading, writing, and math.

We anticipate that our students will continue to benefit from this additional funding and support each year. Therefore, in an effort to support our most vulnerable learners within our schools, we are advocating that the following funding and directive be moved into the **Core Education Fund for Special Education**.

E4 Project Plan - Summer Learning for Students with Special Education Needs

This would assist school boards in long term planning for summer programs and transitions for our exceptional students, knowing that school boards can rely on this funding on an annual basis.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours in Catholic Education,





Via email minister.edu@ontario.ca

The Honourable Paul Calandra Minister of
Education
438 University Ave 5th Floor
Toronto, ON, M5G 2K8

Dear Minister Calandra,

This letter is in response to a recommendation brought forward by the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB).

WCDSB is extremely grateful for the Responsive Education Program (REP) funding the Ministry of Education has provided school boards for the last **two** years for the role of a **Special Education Needs Transition Navigator**. This aligns with the Ministry's initiative to support students with special needs and their families as they prepare for transitions to various pathways after high school.

The Special Education Needs Transition Navigator plays a critical role in sharing best practices, resources, and tools that promote successful transitions for students with special education needs. This support spans key transition points—into, during, and out of school—and includes guiding families through the move from elementary to secondary school.

Additionally, the Special Education Needs Transition Navigator helps families access and engage with community agencies and services to ensure they receive the support they need. This position also assists students and families who have received a new diagnosis or are new to the region in connecting with local community resources.

Since the role was introduced in the 2024–2025 school year, there have been over 201 students served directly/indirectly. Furthermore, the position also supports educators in professional learning and training sessions to assist students with special education needs to navigate systems in their transitions. The role has supported over 350 staff since its inception. This position has been a great addition to the school board, and the above data demonstrates the ongoing need and impact of this role on school communities.

We anticipate that our students will continue to benefit from this additional funding and support each year. Therefore, to support our most vulnerable learners within our schools, we are advocating that the funding and directive for **Special Education Needs Transition Navigator** be moved into the **Core Education Fund for Special Education**.

This would assist schools and families in long-term planning and transitions for our exceptional students, knowing that school boards can rely on this funding on an annual basis.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours in Catholic Education,

