

**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC) MEETING**

**Wednesday, September 16, 2026**

**Jim McCuaig Education Centre**

Suzanne Posthumus  
Chair

Alina Cameron  
Vice Chair

**AGENDA**

**PUBLIC SESSION**

**4:00 p.m. – Board Room/Microsoft Teams**

|                                                                                                                          | <u>Resource Person</u>       | <u>Pages</u> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. CALL TO ORDER                                                                                                         | A. Cameron                   |              |
| 2. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST                                                                                    |                              |              |
| 3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA                                                                                                | A. Cameron                   |              |
| 4. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT                                                                                                  | A. Cameron                   |              |
| 5. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS                                                                                             |                              |              |
| 5.1 Introduction of Special Education Team                                                                               | M. Fredrickson;<br>S. Curtis |              |
| 5.2 Special Education Summer Camps                                                                                       | M. Fredrickson;<br>S. Curtis |              |
| 5.3 Transitions to School Programs                                                                                       | M. Fredrickson<br>S. Curtis  |              |
| 5.4 Delegations – N/A                                                                                                    |                              |              |
| 6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – PUBLIC SESSION                                                                                  |                              |              |
| • Special Education Advisory Committee -<br>June 10, 2026                                                                | A. Cameron                   | 1-4          |
| 7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND GENERAL ORDERS                                                                                |                              |              |
| • SEAC Guest Speaker Event Update                                                                                        | M. Probizanski               |              |
| 8. WORK PLAN                                                                                                             | All                          | 5-9          |
| 9. CORRESPONDENCE                                                                                                        | A. Cameron                   | 10-21        |
| • Blue Water District School Board - Letter to Minister<br>of Education Re: Special Education and Mental Health Funding; |                              |              |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <u>Resource Person</u> | <u>Pages</u> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July at Abiinojiishiik amino yawook EarlyON;</li> <li>• George Jeffery Children's Centre - Summer Program Flyers;</li> <li>• Thames Valley District School Board - Letter to Minister of Education Re: Special Education Programs &amp; Services Funding;</li> <li>• August at Abiinojiishiik amino yawook EarlyON;</li> <li>• 2026-2027 Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Invitation to SEAC Members to serve as Representatives on PIC; and</li> <li>• Raising Capable Kids in the Age of AI (Virtual Event), September 24, 2026.</li> </ul> |                        |              |
| 10. NEW BUSINESS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                        |              |
| 10.1 Special Education Update                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | S. Curtis              |              |
| 11. INFORMATION/ INQUIRIES & ASSOCIATION REPORTS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | All                    |              |
| 12. SEAC BUDGET UPDATE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | M. Probizanski         |              |
| 13. PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE (PIC) UPDATE – N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                        |              |
| 14. EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE – N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                        |              |
| 15. BOARD UPDATE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Trustee                |              |
| 16. ADJOURNMENT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                        |              |

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)**

Jim McCuaig Education Centre  
Board Room/Microsoft Teams

2026 JUN 10  
6:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Suzanne Posthumus, Chair  
Anne Antenucci  
Scott McBean  
Trustee Trudy Tuchenhausen  
Wendy Caroll

Amy Bisette (alternate)  
Miranda Myers  
Sarah Niles  
Trustee George Saarinen

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Michelle Probizanski  
Simona Serrao  
Trustee Patricia Johansen

Maggie Fredrickson  
Patti-Jo Pesola

**ABSENT WITH REGRET:**

Alina Cameron, Vice Chair  
Michelle Blackburn

Liz Tod  
Tara Ingram

1. **Call to Order**

Suzanne Posthumus, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. **Disclosure of Conflict of Interest**

Scott McBean of Children's Centre Thunder Bay, declared conflict of interest for item 7.2 of the agenda.

3. **Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by Trustee Saarinen

Seconded by Anne Antenucci

*"That the agenda for the SEAC Meeting, June 10, 2026, be approved."*

**CARRIED**

4. **Land Acknowledgement**

Suzanne Posthumus, Chair, acknowledged the lands and traditional territory.

5. **Delegations and Presentations**

5.1 Patti-Jo Pesola, Superintendent of Education - Math Lead, presented the Math Achievement Plan. Committee members were given the opportunity to ask questions, all of which were addressed.

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)**

- 5.2 Maggie Fredrickson, Principal of Special Education, presented the 2026-2027 Special Education Plan. Committee members were given the opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions, all of which were addressed.
- 5.3 Michelle Probizanski, Superintendent of Education, presented the results of the School Climate Data Survey. Committee members were given the opportunity to ask questions, all of which were addressed.
- 5.4 Delegations – N/A.

6. Approval of Minutes

Moved by Trustee Tuchenhagen

Seconded by Anne Antenucci

*“That the minutes of May 20, 2026, SEAC meeting be approved.”*

CARRIED

7. Unfinished Business and General Orders

7.1 Follow-up: New Bridges Classrooms

Michelle Probizanski, Superintendent of Education, provided the following update:

- New Bridges classrooms will accommodate students in Grades 2–5 and Grades 6–8;
- planned changes to the school environment to accommodate these new classrooms will be implemented over the summer, including the purchase and installation of necessary equipment; and
- teaching and student support resources have been allocated to the classrooms to support instructional and collaborative needs.

7.2 Guest Speaker Information: SEAC Fall Event

Maggie Fredrickson, Principal of Special Education, reminded committee members to provide their feedback on the proposed guest speaker options. The details were circulated by email and included in the meeting package. Feedback is to be submitted to Simona Serrao, Executive Secretary, by June 17, 2026.

8. Work Plan

Committee members were asked to review the 2025-2026 SEAC work plan and identify any items requiring addition, with input to be forwarded to Executive Secretary, Simona Serrao. The final copy of the work plan will be circulated as part of the SEAC meeting package in September 2026.

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)**

9. Correspondence

Suzanne Posthumus, Chair, reviewed the SEAC correspondence that was distributed during the months of May and June 2026, as follows:

- letter of support to Ministry of Education: Upper Grand District School Board, SEAC for Simcoe County District School Board's special education and mental health needs funding;
- June at Abiinojiishik amino yawook EarlyON; and
- Regional Assessment and Resource Centre (RARC) –Workshop Series Registration: Parents of Students with Disabilities or ADHD, Grades 7-9.

10. New Business

10.1 Maggie Fredrickson, Principal of Special Education, provided an update highlighting:

- review of special education data of students with exceptionality;
- the receipt and planned use of summer learning funding from the Ministry of Education to support students with special education needs and facilitate a successful transition back to school in September 2026; and
- recognition of special education students and schools for achievements in academics, athletics, and Special Olympics participation.

Committee members were given the opportunity to ask questions, all of which were addressed.

10.2 SIP (Special Incidence Portion), SEA (Special Equipment Amount) Audit

Michelle Probizanski, Superintendent of Education, provided an update on the Ministry of Education audit of SIP, SEA, and specialized equipment at Vance Chapman Public School and Westmount Public School. Feedback was shared and will be forwarded to the Ministry, including advocacy related to increased student needs and staffing supports.

Committee members were given the opportunity to ask questions, all of which were addressed.

10.3 SEAC Presentation Schedule for Next Year

Feedback was requested for the 2026-2027 presentation schedule. Committee members indicated support for the usual annual presentations and suggested potential additions, including:

- Math Achievement Plan (special education focus);
- EQAO;
- Creative Therapy, Ignite;
- Firefly Urgent Response; and
- a "Day in the Life of an SSP."

LAKEHEAD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)**

Additional feedback can be submitted by email to Simona Serrao, Executive Secretary.

11. Information/Inquiries & Association Reports

- the draft SEAC letter to the Minister of Education addressing concerns regarding recent legislation, special education funding, and the impact on students with special education needs was circulated via email. Feedback on the draft is requested and should be submitted to Simona Serrao, Executive Secretary, by the end of June 2026; and
- for the 2026–2027 SEAC meeting schedule, consideration is being given to moving meetings to daytime or later afternoon time slots. A survey will be distributed to gather input on this potential change.

12. SEAC Budget Update

Michelle Probizanski, Superintendent of Education, provided the budget update.

13. Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Update – N/A

14. Board Update

Trustee Saarinen, provided the following Board update:

- Bill 101 (Putting Student Achievement First Act, 2026) introduces changes to school board governance, including the role of Director of Education now designated as Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and revision of the scope of duties of trustees;
- the budget for the 2026-2027 school year is in the final stages of development, with stakeholder feedback incorporated; and
- trustee elections for the new term will take place on October 26, 2026.

15. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

## SEAC Work Plan 2025-2026

Update: July 8, 2026

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                    |                                                        |
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| <b>Goal 1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Increase SEAC Awareness and Understanding of Schools and Special Education Programs and Services</b>                                                                                                                      |                    |                                                        |
| <b>Strategies</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite at least three schools to present information on how they support students and provide a tour of facility.</li> <li>• Hold SEAC meetings at schools that present.</li> </ul> |                    |                                                        |
| <b>Indicators of Success</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEAC members increase knowledge and understanding of services offered within the school community</li> </ul>                                                                        |                    |                                                        |
| <b>Timeline</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | June 2025 and ongoing                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Responsible</b> | Chair, Vice Chair, Superintendent, Executive Secretary |
| <b>Record of Progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lakehead District School Board (LDSB) Learning Supports Team presentation at SEAC meeting, September 17, 2025;</li> <li>• Lakehead Public Schools Language Team presentation at SEAC meeting, October 15, 2025;</li> <li>• Students with Special Needs Classroom Presentation and tour at SEAC meeting, November 19, 2025, held at Vance Chapman Public School;</li> <li>• Claude E. Garton Public-school, special education facilitator presentation - A Day in the Life of a special education facilitator at SEAC meeting, December 17, 2025; and Vision Itinerant Services Presentation at SEAC meeting, December 17, 2025;</li> <li>• Autism Student Supports - Registered Behavior Analyst, Sasha Friske &amp; Kim Pineau, Autism Resource Teacher presentation at SEAC meeting, January 21, 2026;</li> <li>• Westgate Collegiate &amp; Vocational Institute – Special Needs Classroom Presentation and Tour – April 15, 2026;</li> <li>• Mental Health Plan (Annual Review) presentation by Megan Semeniuk, Mental Health Lead at SEAC meeting May 20, 2026;</li> <li>• Math Achievement Plan presentation by Patti-Jo Pesola, Superintendent of Education – Math Lead; and Special Education Plan (Annual Review) presentation by Maggie Fredrickson, Principal of Special Education, at SEAC meeting, June 10, 2026;</li> <li>• ongoing SEAC Correspondence;</li> <li>• special education updates by Maggie Fredrickson, Principal of Special Education and Michelle Probizanski, Superintendent of Education; and</li> <li>• updates on school funding, Bill 33 – understanding the Board's response enables the community to remain informed and engaged.</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                    |                                                        |

# SEAC Work Plan 2025-2026

Update: July 8, 2026

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| <b>Goal 2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Advocate for Students with Special Needs</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                    |                  |
| <b>Strategies</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to current opportunities to advocate for students and families (i.e. transition committees, other initiatives)</li> <li>Advocate for students and families through the SEAC Advocacy Program</li> <li>Review and provide input into LDSB policies and corresponding procedures which are relevant to SEAC from September 2025 to June 2026 as outlined in the "Order of Policies for Development and Review"</li> <li>Invite policy review leads to attend and present policies and procedures at SEAC meetings</li> </ul> |                    |                  |
| <b>Indicators of Success</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEAC members have access to a platform which allows them to provide input into LDSB policies and procedures</li> <li>SEAC members are invited to provide input into the LDSB budget</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                    |                  |
| <b>Timeline</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | June 2025 and ongoing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Responsible</b> | All SEAC Members |
| <b>Record of Progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy Review process has been changed: Policies owned by the Board of Trustees under governance are reviewed by the Board as a whole. Administrative policies will be reviewed by Senior Teams. Policies under review are sent out to the committees of the Board for constituent input. List of policies under review for 2025-2026 was shared with SEAC.</li> <li>The Board Updates are shared regularly at SEAC meetings.</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                    |                  |

# SEAC Work Plan 2025-2026

Update: July 8, 2026

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| <b>Goal 3</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Improve Parent / Guardian Knowledge of Special Education and SEAC, and Engage Parents in Supporting Their Child / Children</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                    |                                                       |
| <b>Strategies</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect with Parent Involvement Committee and School Council Chairs to arrange presentation(s) about SEAC</li> <li>• Inform Parents / Guardians of Current Board Initiative</li> <li>• Finalize video(s) related to student supports and accommodations</li> <li>• Include SEAC meeting dates under “Upcoming Events” on the main page of Lakehead Public Schools’ website</li> <li>• Send SEAC information out to community organizations (i.e. role, meeting dates)</li> </ul> |                    |                                                       |
| <b>Indicators of Success</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback through SEAC Members</li> <li>• Participation level in SEAC events</li> <li>• Broader distribution of SEAC information within the community</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                    |                                                       |
| <b>Timeline</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | June 2025 and Ongoing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Responsible</b> | All SEAC Members, Superintendent, Executive Secretary |
| <b>Record of Progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2025-2026 SEAC meeting schedule has been uploaded to the LDSB website;</li> <li>• The Evolution of Inclusion Presentation by Shelley Moore;</li> <li>• Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) information table at Kindergarten night, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at École Elsie MacGill Public School;</li> <li>• Special Education pamphlets updated and shared with schools; and</li> <li>• Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) information table at Grade 8 Open House nights at high schools.</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                    |                                                       |

# SEAC Work Plan 2025-2026

Update: July 8, 2026

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| <b>Goal 4</b>                                                                                       | <b>Keep SEAC Materials Current</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                    |                                                       |
| <b>Strategies</b>                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update binders on an annual basis (as needed)</li> <li>Review and update advocacy memo; share with schools, community partners and post on the Board website</li> <li>Maintain SEAC advocacy information, and other materials, which can be shared with students, parents/guardians/caregivers and schools.</li> </ul> |                    |                                                       |
| <b>Indicators of Success</b>                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEAC materials are current and available for easy access</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                    |                                                       |
| <b>Timeline</b>                                                                                     | Ongoing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Responsible</b> | All SEAC Members, Superintendent, Executive Secretary |
| <b>Record of Progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Binders are up to date.</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                    |                                                       |

## SEAC Work Plan 2025-2026

Update: July 8, 2026

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| <b>Goal 5</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Provide Input to the Board, organizations, agencies and committees as requested.</b>                      |                    |                                                       |
| <b>Strategies</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with other bodies to support special needs students</li> </ul> |                    |                                                       |
| <b>Indicators of Success</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requests for SEAC engagement have been addressed.</li> </ul>          |                    |                                                       |
| <b>Timeline</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Ongoing                                                                                                      | <b>Responsible</b> | All SEAC Members, Superintendent, Executive Secretary |
| <b>Record of Progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEAC representatives attend Parent Involvement Committee meetings;</li> <li>SEAC provides input on the annual proposed budget with the opportunity of submitting a budget deputation for consideration; and</li> <li>Request was put out to SEAC to join the Equity Committee. SEAC Chair, Suzanne Posthumus, accepted the opportunity to represent SEAC in this committee.</li> </ul> |                                                                                                              |                    |                                                       |

**SEAC**

**CORRESPONDENCE**



# Bluewater District School Board

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June 1, 2026

The Honourable Paul Calandra  
Minister of Education  
5th Floor 438 University Avenue  
Toronto, ON M7A 2A5

VIA EMAIL: [minister.edu@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.edu@ontario.ca)

## **Subject: Funding Support for Students with Special Education and Mental Health Needs**

Dear Minister Calandra:

On behalf of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB), I am writing in support of the Simcoe County District School Board SEAC's letter of January 14, 2026, regarding special education and mental health funding priorities. We share the concerns of other boards related to the persistence of an inadequate special education funding model at a time when the complexity of student needs and demand for corresponding services continue to grow.

BWDSB has been navigating recent staffing reductions in special education services stemming from broader and significant fiscal pressures across our system, including funding constraints, cost increases, and the obligation to maintain a balanced budget under provincial legislation. Unfortunately, surplus that was used in previous years to support our special education budget is no longer available, further exacerbating the issue.

With this in mind, we are highlighting the following priority areas that we urge your ministry to consider:

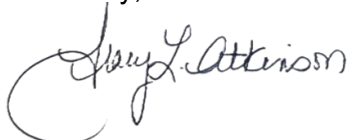
- **Special education funding:** We appreciate the recent Special Incidence Portion funding updates by your ministry. However, overall special education funding still falls below what is required to address the rising costs associated with recruiting and retaining support staff, including educational assistants, whose expertise is critical to supporting the growing needs of our most vulnerable students. It has also become increasingly difficult to meet these students' complex needs when expenses are exceeding funding, thus causing multi-million-dollar deficits within the special education envelope.
- **Community mental health supports:** While our board invests heavily in a robust and responsive system-wide mental health team to provide tiered student support across 42 schools, these services alone cannot replace the clinical interventions that are essential through our community partners and agencies. Adequate funding from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services for wrap-around community services ensures that students can access much-needed mental health supports beyond the limitations of what our schools can deliver. In BWDSB, we rely on the work and expertise of our invaluable partners in children's mental health, such as Keystone Child, Youth & Family Services. It is important to note that our board spans a vast and unique geography, where easy access to services is crucial for families. This is especially pronounced when considering the many crisis and tragedy responses that our board has had to manage recently.

- **Alignment with accessibility legal requirements:** As the 2025 deadline approaches for the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, it is imperative that capital investments are dedicated to ensuring physical accessibility needs are met in our schools, such as elevators, ramps, washroom enhancements, and the retrofitting or addition of other spaces. Current budget allocations pose significant challenges in meeting these vital obligations.

One of this year's identified priorities of the BWDSB SEAC is focused on making sure that the voices of our students and parents/guardians are captured in our work and advocacy efforts. We respectfully ask that the ministry consider the above areas of shared concern with the families we represent, and work collaboratively with us and other boards on effective solutions moving forward.

Thank you for your continued commitment to supporting our students with special education needs. We appreciate your attention to this critically important and timely matter.

Sincerely,



Tracy Lynn Atkinson  
Chair, SEAC

cc: The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
Paul Vickers, MPP, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound  
The Honourable Lisa Thompson, MPP, Huron-Bruce  
Ontario Public School Boards' Association  
Ontario School Board Chairs  
Chairs of Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees  
Board of Trustees, BWDSB  
AJ Keene, BWDSB Chief Executive Officer

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# Abinojiiishiik-amino-yawook EarlyON Child and Family Centre

## July

| SUNDAY | MONDAY                                                              | TUESDAY                                                        | WEDNESDAY                                                                                     | THURSDAY                                                          | FRIDAY                                                | SATURDAY                     |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
|        |                                                                     |                                                                | 1<br>CLOSED<br>Canada Day                                                                     | 2<br>Drop In<br>9:00 - 3:30                                       | 3<br>Drop In<br>9:00 - 2:00                           | 4                            |
| 5      | 6<br>Drop In<br>11:30 - 3:00<br>Family Fun<br>Night<br>3:30 - 6:00  | 7<br>Teddy Bear<br>Picnic<br>11:00 - 3:00                      | 8<br>Drop In<br>9:00 - 12:30<br>Little<br>Learners in<br>Limbrick<br>1:00 - 3:30              | 9<br>Drop In<br>9:00 - 3:30                                       | 10                                                    | 11<br>Drop In<br>9:00 - 3:30 |
| 12     | 13<br>Drop In<br>1:00 - 3:00<br>Family Fun<br>Night<br>3:30 - 6:00  | 14<br>Fun in the Sun<br>10:00 - 1:00<br>Drop In<br>1:30 - 3:30 | 15<br>Drop In<br>9:00 - 3:30<br>Q&A with<br>Speech<br>Language<br>Pathologist<br>10:00 - 1:00 | 16<br>Drop In<br>9:00 - 3:30                                      | 17<br>Drop In<br>9:00 - 2:00                          | 18                           |
| 19     | 20<br>Drop In<br>11:30 - 3:00<br>Family Fun<br>Night<br>3:30 - 6:00 | 21<br>Fun in the<br>Sun at<br>Marina Park<br>10:00 - 2:00      | 22<br>Drop In<br>9:00 - 12:30<br>Little<br>Learners in<br>Limbrick<br>1:00 - 3:30             | 23<br>Drop In<br>9:00 - 12:00<br>Dilico<br>Pow Wow<br>1:00 - 4:00 | 24<br>Morning<br>Munchies &<br>Drop In<br>9:00 - 2:00 | 25                           |
| 26     | 27<br>Drop In<br>1:00 - 3:00<br>Family Fun<br>Night<br>3:30 - 6:00  | 28<br>Fun in the Sun<br>10:00 - 1:00<br>Drop In<br>1:30 - 3:30 | 29<br>Drop In<br>9:00 - 3:30                                                                  | 30<br>Drop In<br>9:00 - 3:30                                      | 31                                                    |                              |

# *Abiinojüshiik-amino-yawook*

translated means children raised in a good way.

Parents and caregivers of infants and children up to the age of six can access the center five days a week for learning experience, social interaction, support from early childhood educators. As an Anishinabek-led center, parents and caregivers can expect the center to be culturally-safe, relevant, reciprocal, and respectful.

## *EarlyON Program Information*

**Drop In** - Perfect place for kids to play, explore, and make new friends in a safe and welcoming environment! No registration required—just drop in during our open hours and let the fun begin.

**Morning Munchies & Drop In** - Start your day with a tasty and nutritious breakfast snack while connecting with other families. Children can play, explore, and make new friends in a safe, welcoming environment. No registration is needed—simply drop in during open hours

**Family Fun Night** - Join us for an evening of family fun! Enjoy activities with your child(ren), connect with other families, and share a dinner in a safe and welcoming environment. Registration required: call 807-939-3160 or text 807-632-0530.

**Little Learners in Limbrick** - Join us outdoors behind Kookum's place for an afternoon of fun filled activities.  
Location: 78-I Limbrick Place.

**Fun in the Sun** - Join us at the Thunder Bay Friendship Garden!  
It's a wonderful place for families to explore, play, and enjoy time together outdoors.

**Fun in the Sun at Marina** - Enjoy a nice walk with friends followed by fun playtime at the playground. A great opportunity to get active, explore the outdoors, and connect with others!

**Q&A with Speech Language Pathologist** - Have questions about your child's speech and language development? Stop by for an Q&A session and get answers from a Speech-Language Pathologist.

# EMOTION EXPLORERS

A SOCIAL EMOTIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT

## SUMMER CAMP!



**August 10 - 14**



**9am - 12pm**



**200 Brock Street East**



Practice noticing and naming their emotions, understanding how feelings, thoughts, and values are connected, and making honest and kind choices. The group also introduces ideas about fairness, empathy, and recognizing biases in age-appropriate ways.



### Camp Details

This group helps children learn more about who they are and how they fit into the world around them. Children will explore their personal, cultural, and language strengths while building pride in their identities.



### Eligibility Criteria

Ages 6 - 10

Follows 2-step instructions; functional expressive communication; turn taking skills with support.



### Registration Information

Sign up by July 31. Limited spots available.

For more information call

Chantal Lesschaeve at 807-620-5624



Supervised by a Registered Psychotherapist. Coverage may be available through OAP Core Clinical Funding or Extended Health Benefits!



Scan the QR code to register!

Registration  
**\$250**





# LEVEL UP YOUR SOCIAL GAME:

## A 2 DAY WORKSHOP ON INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS FOR TEENS



August 12 and 13



1 - 4pm



200 Brock Street E



Participants will learn through role play and hands on activities in a welcoming, safe environment with tools to take with them for ongoing success!

### This intensive workshop will support neurodiverse teens to:

- ✓ Strengthen interpersonal effectiveness skills
- ✓ Communicate needs
- ✓ Set boundaries
- ✓ Maintain relationships
- ✓ Preserve self-respect



### Eligibility Criteria:

Ages 13 - 17  
Reciprocal conversation skills (answers and asks social questions), expresses self in sentences, understands spoken/written paragraphs



### Registration Information:

Sign up by July 31. Limited spots available.  
For more information call  
Chantal Lesschaeve at 807-620-5624



Supervised by a Registered Psychotherapist. Coverage may be available through OAP Core Clinical Funding or Extended Health Benefits!



Scan the QR code to register!

Registration  
**\$200**

June 22, 2026

Hon. Paul Calandra  
Minister of Education  
15th Floor  
438 University Ave.  
Toronto, ON M7A 2A5

VIA EMAIL : [minister.edu@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.edu@ontario.ca)

**Subject: Funding Support for Students Requiring Special Education Programs and Services**

Dear Minister Calandra,

On behalf of the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), I am writing to express our concern that provincial special education funding remains inadequate to meet the needs of students requiring special education programs and services.

The draft TVDSB Special Education Budget presented to SEAC on June 15, 2026, indicates that despite significant reductions and cost-saving measures, the special education budget remains more than \$9 million in deficit. SEAC is deeply concerned that the actual unmet needs of students exceed this deficit by a considerable margin. For many years, provincial special education funding has been insufficient to meet the needs of Thames Valley students. As a result, the Board has routinely allocated substantial funding from its general operating budget to address these shortfalls after careful consideration of its obligations to students with special education needs.

School boards have a legal obligation to meet the needs of exceptional pupils under the *Education Act* and related regulations. This obligation is grounded in a needs-based approach, as reflected in sections 170(1)(7) and 8(3) of the *Education Act*, as well as in the definitions of “special education program” and “special education services,” which focus on ensuring that vulnerable students receive the supports they require. Section 8(3) of the *Education Act* requires the Minister to ensure that “all exceptional children...have available to them...appropriate special education program and special education services.”

The Auditor General’s *Performance Audit on Special Education Needs* (May 2026) states that the needs of students with special education needs are not being met: “Special education programs and services did not consistently fulfill the requirements of students with special education needs ... inadequate resourcing ... hindered students’ access to essential supports ... Long wait times delayed professional assessments...and prevented schools from providing students the most suitable services and supports.” (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, page 5).

At Thames Valley, approximately 15% of students have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that identifies the programs, accommodations, modifications, and services required to support their learning based on ongoing assessment and evaluation. However, the implementation of these supports continues to be constrained by available financial resources. SEAC members regularly hear from parents whose children have identified

needs documented in their IEPs, but who are not consistently receiving all of the supports and services required. According to the Auditor General's Report, teachers do not feel like they have the necessary resources to adequately meet the needs of the students in their classrooms: "87% of teachers in inclusive classrooms reported sometimes, rarely, or never having the necessary resources to implement IEPs effectively." (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, page 26). This reflects a significant gap between the programs and services currently funded and those necessary for school boards and the Province to fulfill their obligations under the Education Act.

SEAC was encouraged by the Ministry of Education's response to Recommendation 9 of the Auditor General's *Report on Special Education*, which stated:

"The Ministry agrees with this recommendation and recognizes the importance of meeting the needs of all students."

In light of these commitments, SEAC respectfully requests that the Ministry review the special education funding allocation provided to TVDSB for the 2026–2027 school year and seriously consider increasing funding to better reflect students' actual needs. We also strongly encourage the Ministry to reconsider the current funding model to ensure that funding levels are responsive to student needs and that students have timely access to the programs and services necessary for their success.

Thank you for considering the concerns of the Thames Valley District School Board SEAC. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues further and respond to any questions you may have. SEAC remains committed to supporting students with special education needs and advocating for an education system that provides equitable access to the programs and services they require.

Sincerely,



Alison Morse

Chair, SEAC  
Thames Valley District School Board

Cc: Paul Boniferno, Provincial Board Supervisor  
Kevin Auckland, Chief Executive Officer, TVDSB  
Ontario Public School Board Association (OPSBA)  
School Board Special Education Advisory Committees (SEAC)

# Abiinojiishiik-amino-yawook EarlyON Child and Family Centre August

| SUNDAY | MONDAY                                                                         | TUESDAY                                                                      | WEDNESDAY                                                                                 | THURSDAY                                                      | FRIDAY                                                     | SATURDAY                            |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2      | 3<br><b>CLOSED</b><br>Civic Holiday                                            | 4                                                                            | 5                                                                                         | 6                                                             | 7                                                          | 1<br>8                              |
| 9      | 10<br><b>Drop In</b><br>1:00 - 3:00<br><b>Family Fun Night</b><br>3:30 - 6:00  | 11<br><b>Fun in the Sun</b><br>10:00 - 1:00<br><b>Drop In</b><br>1:30 - 3:30 | 12<br><b>Drop In</b><br>9:00 - 3:30                                                       | 13<br><b>Drop In</b><br>9:00 - 3:30<br><b>Smart Start Hub</b> | 14<br><b>Drop In</b><br>9:00 - 2:00                        | 15                                  |
| 16     | 17<br><b>Drop In</b><br>11:30 - 3:00<br><b>Family Fun Night</b><br>3:30 - 6:00 | 18<br><b>Fun in the Sun</b><br>10:00 - 1:00<br><b>Drop In</b><br>1:30 - 3:30 | 19<br><b>ONWA Family Fun Day BBQ</b><br>11:00 - 2:00                                      | 20<br><b>Drop In</b><br>9:00 - 3:30<br><b>Smart Start Hub</b> | 21<br><b>Morning Munchies &amp; Drop In</b><br>9:00 - 2:00 | 22                                  |
| 23     | 24<br><b>Drop In</b><br>1:00 - 3:00<br><b>Family Fun Night</b><br>3:30 - 6:00  | 25<br><b>Fun in the Sun</b><br>10:00 - 1:00<br><b>Drop In</b><br>1:30 - 3:30 | 26<br><b>Drop In</b><br>9:00 - 12:30<br><b>Little Learners in Limbrick</b><br>1:00 - 3:30 | 27<br><b>Drop In</b><br>9:00 - 2:00<br><b>Smart Start Hub</b> | 28                                                         | 29<br><b>Drop In</b><br>9:00 - 3:00 |
| 30     | 31<br><b>Drop In</b><br>1:00 - 3:00<br><b>Family Fun Night</b><br>3:30 - 6:00  |                                                                              |                                                                                           |                                                               |                                                            |                                     |

**EarlyON Closed - Staff Holidays**

August 19, 2026

Suzanne Posthumus, Chair  
Special Education Advisory Committee  
[suzannep@optionsnorthwest.com](mailto:suzannep@optionsnorthwest.com)

Dear Suzanne:

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is invited to nominate two parent SEAC representatives (one member and one alternate) to serve on the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) for 2026-2027. The positions will be effective November 16, 2026, to November 16, 2027. The Parent Involvement Committee meets a minimum of four times per year.

*The purpose of the Parent Involvement Committee is to support, encourage and enhance parent engagement at the Board level to improve student achievement and well-being. Reg. 330/10 Sec.27(1)*

Please submit the names of SEAC's nominees to Christine Jones, Executive Assistant, by Friday, September 20, 2026.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Sherri-Lynne Pharand  
Chief Executive Officer

cc M. Probizanski, Superintendent of Education  
S. Serrao, Executive Secretary

# YOU'RE INVITED!

## Raising Capable Kids in the Age of AI

**Presented By Jake Ernst, MSW RSW**

This parent event explores how rapid advances in AI and technology are quietly reshaping childhood, not just how kids learn, but how they develop emotionally, socially, and relationally. While technology can support education and efficiency, it cannot replace the real-world experiences that build capable, resilient humans.



**Hosted by the  
Parent Involvement Committee**

**Date:** September 24, 2026

**Time:** 6:30 pm

**Location:** Virtual, scan  
the QR code to view  
the stream.



**Open to everyone!**

**PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE**



*Parent involvement in education*

Simona Serrao

**Assistant to Kirsti Alaksa, Superintendent of Business; and  
Michelle Probizanski, Superintendent of Education**

Office of the Superintendents



Lakehead District School Board  
Jim McCuaig Education Centre  
2135 Sills Street  
Thunder Bay, Ontario, P7E 5T2  
Telephone # 625-5126