

THAMES VALLEY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**February 4, 2025, 12:15 p.m. – 2:37 p.m.
London Room**

Representatives

C. Pecican, Autism Ontario London
A. Morse, Easter Seals Ontario
C. Read, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Network
P. Cook, Inclusion Action Ontario
D. Shore-Reid, Learning Disabilities Association of London
R. Askew, London Down Syndrome Association
C. Fortnum, LHSC, Children's Hospital (-2:30)
K. Vandersluis, Additional Member
B. Mai, TVDSB Trustee
S. Moore, TVDSB Trustee
L. Pizzolato, TVDSB Trustee (Chair)

Alternates

C. Nicolle, Autism Ontario London (-1:45)
T. Grant, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Network
R. Ramjeawan, Community Services Coordination Network
C. Devlin, London Autism and Disabilities Group
D. Cryderman, LHSC, Children's Hospital
B. Sell, Ontario Parents for Visually Impaired Children
A. Mouselimis, Vanier Children's Services
V. Hlady-MacDonald, VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

Absent

T. Leckie, Association for Bright Children

Administration and Others

J. Bruce, Superintendent
M. Chevalier, System Principal
C. Nichols, System Principal
M. Miszkiewicz, Principal
H. Powell, Principal
K. Lambert, Manager (+12:25)
S. Gingras, Communications
J. Meyer, Board Services
J. Wood, Associate Research and Assessment (-1:05)
K. Auckland, Superintendent (+12:53)(-1:35)
J. Gould, Supervisor, Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology (+12:53)(1:35)
H. Jakobi, System Principal (+12:53)(-1:35)

1. Call to Order

Chair Pizzolato called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. and reviewed meeting decorum with committee members.

A roll call was conducted.

2. Confirmation of Agenda

Without objection, the agenda was approved as printed.

3. Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the January 7, 2025, meeting were approved as printed.

5. Unfinished Business

a. SEAC Key Issues - Enhancing Early Interventions and Streamlining the IEP Implementation (item #9)

System Principal Nichols reviewed the discussion from the January meeting, focusing on how the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) can support parents in the development and implementation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Discussion included existing parent resources for IEPs, increasing community partner collaboration including best practices for resource sharing between agencies. It was noted many families face challenges accessing digital resources and consideration should be given to creating print materials as well.

Administration captured feedback from committee members on the IEP video created by the Special Education Department.

It was suggested a sub-committee or working group be struck with the mandate to bring special education resources to the SEAC for review and recommendation.

Questions of clarification were addressed by Administration regarding the diversity of staff expertise conducting audits, whether Equity and Inclusive Education (EIE) is part of the IEP audit process and whether communication guides are still used in schools.

6. Presentations

a. School Climate Surveys, 2024-2025

Superintendent Bruce introduced Research and Assessment Associate Wood who shared a PowerPoint presentation on the 2024-2025 School Climate Survey. The presentation outlined the purpose and value of the survey, as well as how survey results are used. Key information was highlighted including eligible survey respondents, timelines, and mechanisms for accessing the survey. It was noted the survey must be

anonymous and conducted every two years as required by the Education Act.

A video was shared highlighting the importance of a positive school climate from the staff and student perspective at Lord Nelson Elementary School.

A link to the survey which opens February 24, 2025, was provided.

Questions of clarification were addressed by Administration regarding how SEAC member organizations can share the survey information with their constituents, whether individual schools are provided with their own data, and whether results relevant to special education students can be shared with the committee.

Chair Pizzolato extended appreciation to the presenter.

b. Early Reading Screener Update

Superintendent Bruce introduced Superintendent Auckland, System Principal Jakobi, and Supervisor Gould who gave a PowerPoint presentation on the implementation of Acadience, the Ministry mandated early reading assessment tool. It was noted Acadience is an evidence-based tool used by most school boards within the province. The tool is comprised of six screener measures that assist in identifying the acquisition of literacy skills to support and prevent reading difficulties.

Students in year 2 of kindergarten, grade 1, and grade 2 are required to be screened twice in a school year, however, the second screening is optional for students who met the benchmark in the first screening.

It was noted training on the tool is being provided to the relevant Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) educators.

Questions of clarification were addressed by the presenters regarding the alignment of the benchmarks with the Canadian norms, data mining, supports available for deaf and hard of hearing students, expanding the assessment beyond grade 2, next steps for students identified as needing additional supports, and parent/caregiver communication as it relates to assessment results and next steps in the process.

Chair Pizzolato extended appreciation to the presenters.

7. Special Education Plan

Chair Pizzolato referred to the Special Education Plan standards provided to committee members in the agenda package. The four standards reviewed by the Special Education Plan sub-committee were outlined, noting clean and working copies were provided. The majority of the changes made were housekeeping in nature.

Additional feedback was captured by Administration.

Committee members were encouraged to contact any member of the sub-committee with minor corrections or questions of clarification.

8. Specialized Equipment Allocation (SEA) Costs Update

Superintendent Bruce provided an update on the Specialized Equipment Amount (SEA) costs, noting there are two components of the funding - formula-based and claims-based. Due to recent Ministry of Education changes, the majority of equipment claims do not meet the \$5,000 threshold, resulting in the formula-based budget being impacted.

Questions of clarification were addressed by Administration regarding the vetting and tracking of applications, and whether supplemental supports are provided if a claim is unsuccessful.

Administration committed to providing an update at a future SEAC meeting.

9. Committee Self-Assessment Report

Chair Pizzolato referred to the SEAC Self-Assessment Survey results provided in the package.

Discussion focused on committee effectiveness including public and member engagement. Additional feedback can be provided to Chair Pizzolato and will be added to the existing self-assessment summary document for planning purposes.

10. Call For Members - IEP Audit

System Principal Chevalier provided details of the IEP Audit, noting it is scheduled for May 2, 2025, at the Education Centre. There is space on the committee to accommodate two to three SEAC members.

A question of clarification was addressed by Administration regarding the time commitment.

Administration committed to sending an email to members outlining the details and expectations.

11. Correspondence (Standing Item)

Chair Pizzolato indicated the Board of Trustees adopted the SEAC's recommendation requesting the Chair of the Board and the Chair of the SEAC write a letter to the Ministry of Education and the College of Teachers expressing concerns about university teacher pre-service programs.

Without objection, the committee agreed to postpone sending the letter until after the provincial election.

Chair Pizzolato committed to sharing the letter with the SEAC.

a. Ministry of Education Email From SEAC Chairs

Chair Pizzolato indicated a letter from the Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB) was received requesting the TVDSB SEAC support their request to advocate for additional provincial funding for special education.

Input from the committee was sought with agreement from members that it is not the role of the SEAC to solicit the government for funding, it is a Board of Trustees responsibility.

b. Durham District School Board SEAC Letter

Chair Pizzolato shared a letter from the Durham District School Board (DDSB) to the Ontario College of Teachers in support of the letter from the Limestone District School Board SEAC regarding pre-service teacher education programs at Ontario Faculties of Education, noting the TVDSB's letter will acknowledge the shared concerns expressed by other school boards to the Ontario College of Teachers.

c. Algoma District School Board SEAC Letter

Chair Pizzolato shared a letter from the Algoma District School Board (ADSB) to the Ontario College of Teachers in support of the letter sent by the Limestone District School Board SEAC bringing forward concerns related to teacher training in special education at Ontario Faculties of Education.

12. Announcements/Member Updates (Standing Item)

No updates were provided by committee members.

Committee members were asked to contact Chair Pizzolato indicating their interest in a SEAC orientation session which would provide members with information specific to the role of the SEAC. A poll will be sent out to members to gauge their interest and availability.

In response to a question, Administration committed to providing the template for SEAC member organizations to submit their information for the SEAC community organization resource. Through discussion it was determined updating this resource would be put on hold until members confirmed what information would be beneficial to share with families.

13. 2024-2025 SEAC Workplan

Chair Pizzolato reviewed the SEAC workplan.

14. Next Meeting Dates

The next meeting is scheduled for March 3, 2025.

15. Adjournment

Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Recommendations: None.

Lori-Ann Pizzolato
Committee Chair

Recording Secretary: JM