

# YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

*Guided by Gospel Values and Catholic Virtues, in partnership with home and Church, we educate and inspire all students to reach their full potential in a safe and caring environment.*

## AGENDA

### SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

December 9, 2024

#### Hybrid Meeting

CEC: 320 Bloomington Rd W Aurora Ontario  
Board Room

7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

#### Questions?

Please complete this [form](#) to submit any questions

Link:

<https://forms.gle/o7CuzGWgg82DL6SE7>

#### Live Stream Link:

<http://bit.ly/YCDSB-TV>

#### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*We are gathered on the ancestral lands and waters of all Indigenous Peoples, who have left their footprints on Mother Earth before us. We respectfully acknowledge those who have walked on it, those who walk on it now, and future generations who have yet to walk on it. We pray to the Creator for strength and wisdom that all may continue to serve as stewards of the earth.*

	Time	Item	Resource	Page
1.0	7:00	OPENING PRAYER / LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	J. Powers	
2.0	7:02	ROLL CALL	J. Powers	
3.0	7:03	ELECTION OF CHAIR	J. Powers	
4.0	7:08	ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR	J. Powers	
5.0	7:13	APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE 2024	Chair	
6.0	7:15	APPROVAL OF NEW MATERIAL	Chair	
7.0	7:16	APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA	Chair	
8.0	7:18	MOMENT OF INPSIRATION Patricia's Story	J. Rea	7
9.0	7:36	APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES	Chair	
10.0	7:37	BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES	Chair	
11.0	7:39	PRESENTATION  11.1 Intensive response Team Presentation	A.Cabraja, J. Barilla, L.Cipollone, P. Evanoff, T. Rousseau	
12.0	8:30	ACTION ITEM(S)	Chair	
13.0	8:30	DISCUSSION ITEM(S)	Chair	
14.0	8:40	INFORMATION ITEM(S)  14.1 Board Meeting Date: December 17, 14.2 SEAC Report to Board Report 2024-11 – November 2024 14.3 LDSB SEAC letter to Ontario College of Teachers 14.4 MASCE update	Chair	12 13 15
15.0	8:45	NOTICE OF MOTION		
16.0	8:46	ASSOCIATION NEWS LDAYS: Winter Programs, Monthly Report – Flyers attached	SEAC Representatives	48
19.0	8:50	FUTURE ITEM(S) Mental Health Department Updates ABA Team Projects	Chair	
20.0	8:55	Next Meeting: January 13, 2025	Chair	
21.0	9:00	ADJOURNMENT	Chair	

Father God,  
We lift our prayers for peace in our hearts, in our  
homes, and in the world. May the message of  
Christmas be a beacon of hope, guiding us to strive  
for harmony and understanding with one another.

Let your peace reign in our lives  
as we seek to live in the light of your love.

Amen.



# Land Acknowledgement

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who have left their footprints on Mother Earth before us .

We respectfully acknowledge those who have walked on it , those who walk

on it now , and future generations who have yet to walk upon it .

We pray to the Creator for strength and wisdom that all may continue to serve

as stewards of the Earth .

Land Acknowledgement by YCDSB's First Nations, Métis and Inuit Steering Committee adapted with PCS by Alana Miraglia and Elaine Marshal in collaboration with SLP Department

# YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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## MINUTES of the SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A regular meeting was held in a hybrid format in person at CEC, 320 Bloomington Rd. W and virtually over Google Meet on **November 11, 2024** at **7:00 p.m.**

### PRESENT:

Committee Members: N, Byrne\*, A. Connolly\*, A. Grella, M. Iafrate, D. Legris, S. Leckey\*, J. Man\*, N. Welch\*, Y. Zhou\*

Association Representatives: M. Marcello\*, C. Sandig\*

Administration: L.Lausic, J. Powers, E. Strano\*

Regrets: A. Carter, A.Cabraja, M. Xue

Recording: C. Mong\*

Guest Presenters: S. Bondy, *Transition Planner/Work Experience Teacher YCDSB*  
L. Colangelo\*, *Special Education Assistive Technology Planner, YCDSB*  
M. Prinzo\*, *Mental Health Manager, YCDSB*  
F. Teran Enriquez, *CO-OP student, YCDSB*

\*Denotes virtual attendance

### CALL TO ORDER / ATTENDANCE

#### 1.0 Prayer and Land Acknowledgement

#### 2.0 Approval of New Material

Nil – No New Material

#### 2.1 Roll Call

#### 3.0 Moment of Inspiration

*Planting the Seeds to EmployAbility: YCDSB Pathways to EmployABILITY program (PEP) Students at St. Maximilian Kolbe CHS and Our Lady Queen of the World CHS had an opportunity to work on greenhouse tasks in collaboration with Ontario Streams. They had gained hands on experience with mulching plants, seeding, invasive species management and so much more!*

[Stress Awareness Videos](#): A Cardinal Carter CHS Co-op Student in collaboration with the Communications department created a series of trendy Autocomplete videos that feature Mental Health Student Ambassadors, Mental Worker and the Mental Health manager to answer questions about stress, how to manage it and what supports are available.

#### 5.0 Approval of Agenda November 11, 2024

**Motion**– Agenda approved (Byrne / Connolly)

#### 6.0 Approval of the Minutes October 21, 2024

**Motion** - Minutes approved (Byrne / Connolly)

#### 7.0 SEAC Report to Board

Report 2024:10 – October 2024

#### 8.0 Information Items

**8.1 Board Meeting Date: October 29, 2024**

**8.2 Student Services Inservice: September 2024-November 2024**

**Items 7.0-8.1 Received on Block (Iafrate / Legris)**

**9.0 Correspondence**

Nil

**10.0 Presentations / Discussions**

**10.1 Parent Education & Awareness Campaign**

- Along with PPM 128, a TPA was created to increase parent/caregivers' awareness about problematic addictive behaviors among youth specifically around vaping and cellphone misuse. M. Prinzo, Mental Health Manager is looking to collect feedback from parents and association representatives. Please email Michelle.Prinzo@ycdsb.ca

**10.2 SEA Guideline Changes**

- This presentation highlighted the changes to the SEA process to the 2024-2025 school year.

**10.3 Special Incidence Portion (SIP) process update**

- Superintendent Powers shared an update to the SIP Claim process for the 2024-2025 school year. The Student Services team submitted data at the end of September to the Ministry.

**10.4 Special Education Transition to Highschool**

- Information about the upcoming in Person Parent/Guardian information session was shared with the committee the event will take place on Wednesday December 4, 2024.

**10.5 Student Services November Recap and updates**

- Superintendent Powers presented a recap of programs and services delivered by the Student Services department over the last month, see page 3.

**11.0 Business Arising**

Nil

**12.0 Action Items**

Nil

**13.0 Association Reports**

- LDAYS: SOAR – Flyer attached
- Autism Ontario: Pathways to Special Education Support

**14.0 Items for Future Agendas**

- SEAC 2024-2025 Vote
- Mental Health Department Updates
- Intensive response Team Presentation

**15.0 Next Meeting: Monday December 9, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m. in a hybrid format over Google Meet and at CEC Board office, 320 Bloomington Rd W Aurora ON.**

**16.0 Motion to adjourn at 8:35 p.m.**

Meeting adjourned (Legris / lafrate)

#### 10.4 Student Services November 2024 Recap and updates

##### **Mental health team:**

We are excited to share that we have begun a pilot project focused on SEL. 83 elementary educators received professional development in delivering Mind Up in their classrooms. The training coaches from Mind Up will support the educators this year in delivering this SEL program. We will provide information on the outcome of this pilot. Renee- the mh instructional lead teacher has been visiting schools delivering lunch n' learns on topics such as using mindful awareness in the classrooms and a maker space for a mental health toolkit. The mental health workers have been busy with referrals for individual short term therapy and have delivered our new Inside Out 2 inspired All About Anxiety workshops to 157 grade 3-6 classrooms board wide. This 3 part workshop teaches student about anxiety and provides them with strategies to use

##### **Secondary Special Education:**

Last month I shared data with regard to Lexia usage in elementary. This month, I am pleased to share that we have almost 400 secondary students now using Lexia PowerUp, an online Reading program that maximizes student learning through a personalized experience that addresses individual skill gaps and impacts reading proficiency and academic success. This targeted approach allows each student to make literacy gains quickly and develop the reading and critical thinking skills necessary to meet the demands of secondary curriculum and beyond.

As we approach the January migration to RISE, our new IEP platform, our Student Services team continues to collaborate with IT on the development of the platform and training plan. Approximately 570 YCDSB staff will be trained on RISE by January and just last week we delivered a "pilot training" session to 30 stakeholders including Special Education Teachers and Department Heads, Guidance Counselors, and Principals. Feedback was gathered from the participants and we are already adjusting the training plan in response to this very helpful feedback.

This Thursday, our secondary Student Services team will be delivering an inservice to secondary Special Education Teachers on the topic of Assessment. Teachers will be trained on how to administer the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement and the Brigance assessment. In an ongoing effort to maintain alignment with the assessment and evaluation policies set out in Growing Success, there will also be a focus on the Triangulation of Assessment data to ensure that products, observations and conversations are all considered when formulating a final grade.

##### **Elementary Special Education:**

Our Elementary Consultants have been collaborating with our partners in Secondary to develop the training sessions for RISE, and preparing for the upcoming training at the end of November.

As well, we continue to train our New to Special Education teachers with inservices on Assessment programs and practices. This month we trained approximately these teachers on Diagnostic and standardized assessments such as the KTEA, Diagnostic Math and the Brigance. Our Literacy consultant has delivered inservices and refreshers to over 50 teachers, on Lexia and Writing A-Z, a program purchased last year to enhance writing in our Special Education Literacy programs.

##### **Occupational & Physical Therapy Services:**

Supported in-person training for personal care plans -toileting for EAs and SEIs in 88 of our schools.

Continue to assess and procure equipment through the SEA (Special Equipment Allocation) fund to ensure students' safety and access to curriculum.

Continue to address and assess physical accessibility concerns across our schools in collaboration with capital and maintenance departments.

## **Why Gifted Education Matters**

My name is Jim Rea. I'm Alternate SEAC for YRDSB representing the Association for Bright Children.

I also work with a Seattle-based company called Bright & Quirky – where I am a mentor to parents with twice exceptional students – students with the exceptionality of being gifted or very bright, as well as the exceptionality of being on the spectrum, having ADHD or some other LD.

This the story of our daughter of our daughter Patricia – and how the YCDSB's PACE program changed her life as a twice exceptional student – igniting a passion for science that has taken her further than we could have dreamed

When Patricia was six, in Grade One at St. Julia Billiard, we had a meeting with our school's special ed department

We were told we should limit our academic expectations for Patricia. Her mind wandered. She had trouble focusing and staying on task in class. She had trouble connecting and relating with her peers. She seemed slow

It was suggested we have her tested to find out if she was on the autism spectrum

After my wife and I received her diagnosis – Autism Spectrum Type 1 and ADHD inattentive type - we went through a grieving process. We didn't share with the school for a year. We had a fear that Patricia would be labeled

But sharing the diagnosis was a gift. Teachers had more understanding and empathy for Patricia.

And her Grade 2 teacher, Ms. Uymas, recognized that Patricia has a spark inside. She made Patricia feel uniquely bright. She began to flourish.

In Grade 4, Patricia was one of the students selected for gifted testing. She shared that the person conducting the test made her feel anxious.

When we came in to meet with the board psychiatrist, I can't recall being told if Patricia was gifted or not. We were told that the PACE program wasn't a good fit for students like Patricia, with ADHD and ASD.

So Patricia continued at St. Julia for grade 5 and grade 6 – where she had excellent teachers. But her best friend had moved onto the PACE program, and she found it hard to connect with other classmates.

And while her marks were good, she was becoming less engaged in school. Friends of ours suggested we have her tested for giftedness privately.

This time her tester was calming and reassuring. And the results confirmed that Patricia was gifted, in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile.

In Grade 7, she made the transition to the PACE program at St. Justin – and she felt she had something to prove. This was a big step-up as her peers had already been on an enriched curriculum for two years

Over her two years in PACE, her marks were mostly in the 70s and 80s –below the class median except for English and the Arts.

However, it was through PACE that she discovered how she had an exceptional talent for science.

I still remember the day that changed everything for her. It was a warm, October afternoon. She had just been dropped off by the bus and she was jumping up and down. “St. Justin has a Science Fair!!!”

Now for most kids, this would be a groan. But Patricia’s eyes were totally lit up! Like she had just learned she’d won tickets to Taylor Swift.

Patricia started thinking about what her Science Fair project might be.

She remembered watching a video on CRISPR – the gene editing tool discovered in 2012 – and being fascinated by it.

So at age 12 she told me she wanted to do genetic engineering experiments for her project.

I was a concerned about doing gene editing at home – I had visions of Jurassic Park. I suggested – why don’t you do something in robotics? Or coding?

And she responded: “This is coding. This is the REAL coding. It’s the genetic code.”

It was then that I realized she was right. The fair would be flooded with robotics and computer coding projects. I realized DNA was going to be the coding language of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This was the kind of project that was investigating the leading edge of science.

For Christmas, she received kits to genetically engineer yeast to make it glow. She conducted experiments with the engineered yeast to test survival at various temperature.

She won her school science fair, and went on to win bronze at the York Regional Science Fair



Afterwards Patricia told me that science fair had been the most satisfying and meaningful experience of her life. The summer was coming up – and she didn't want it to stop

Thanks to good timing, we found her a mentor.

Dr. Justin Pahara at Amino Labs in Alberta was writing a book called Zero to Genetic Engineering hero. Patricia was one of two students selected to be 'Junior Editors' of the book

That summer, Patricia conducted all the experiments in Zero to Hero – and taught them back to Justin. We set up a dedicated lab in our basement. And by the end of that summer, Patricia had the lab skills of a 3<sup>rd</sup> year university student

Justin continued as her mentor – and for her Grade 8 science fair project, she used her new skills to genetically engineer antifreeze proteins from fish and insects into yeast to see if the modified yeast would have a survival advantage when frozen.

That year, Patricia won gold at the regional fair, and was a silver medalist at the Canada Wide Science Fair.

She went on to represent Canada three times at international science fairs. At a research fair in Barcelona, she won the grand award – the Young Scientist Award – for the fair's top research project.

She was also selected as one of 5 'youth innovators' to present her research at MIT when she was 13.

Fundamental to her success were two PACE teachers: Amanda Isacco and Amanda Sit. Ms. Isacco also recognized Patricia was an out of the box, uniquely bright thinker. She truly put the wind in her sails.

And Ms. Sit lightened the demands of Patricia's assignments, understanding that some weeks she was spending more than 40 hours a week on her research project.

Patricia would continue her antifreeze protein research, going on to win Gold at the Canada Wide Science Fair in Grade 10 and Grade 11. She received her first lab internship Mount Sinai hospital the summer she was 16 years old.

While she was exceptional when it came to lab skills and experimental design – those exceptionalities would not have been detected in her high school marks.

At the same time, she was winning national and international awards, her physics grade was 62%. Her chemistry grade was in the low 70s. Her grade 11 math was 68%.

And for acceptance into the life sciences program at her university of choice, U of T doesn't consider extracurriculars like science fairs. Only marks.

So in grade 12, we worked with our school's special education department. We worked with the teachers. Patricia took the year off from science fair, and got her science and math marks up into the low 80s. Yet with 2 days before acceptances closed for the 2022-23 school year, Patricia had still not received an offer.

The principal sent a letter that day to the registrar at U of T requesting they take another look at Patricia. That she was the most accomplished science student in terms of extra curriculars in the 50+ year history of the school. Two hours later, she received an acceptance offer.

Patricia is now in 2<sup>nd</sup> year at U of T. She finished first year with a 3.81 GPA, with a 4.0 in physics, biology and calculus.

She presented her latest research at the 5<sup>th</sup> Protein Engineering Canada Conference hosted by U of T last summer. The professor running the conference, Dr. Wooley offered Patricia a job, and she now works in his protein research lab.

Then in October, Patricia was one of three students selected to represent U of T at an international genetic engineering research competition in Paris. U of T had it's best ever result at the event – finalist for the grand award and top university in North America.

And every year, Patricia has returned to St. Justin to share her science fair story – to spark interest in science and to show what's possible for neurodiverse students like herself.

So what are my learnings as a SEAC from Patricia's journey?

**That the right teachers at the right time makes a profound difference.** Without the spark lit by Ms. Uymas and Ms. Isacco, without the understanding of Ms. Sit or her Grade 12 calculus teacher, she would not be where she is today.

**That many, but not enough teachers understand the challenges faced by neurodiverse students** or the challenges that come with asynchronous development.

**That assessment of student success – i.e. marks and grades – is often not accurate for 2e students.** The way we measure academic success heavily biases in favour of those with a specific neuropsych profile: strong working memory, processing speed and executive function. These are not the strengths of many neurodiverse students.

Nor are high school marks a good predictor of success for university. Where neurotypical students typically see a drop of about 10% in university, twice exceptional students often see an increase of 10% or more.

**That we have not yet figured out the appropriate accommodations to level the playing field for neurodiverse students.** There are many neurodiverse students getting 80%, 70% or 60% in school who have just as much potential as their peers getting 99% - because their marks are faulty data. Providing accommodations that allow neurodiverse students to pass or survive a course shouldn't be our goal. Unless we are blowing on the embers of their strengths and allowing them to see their full potential being reached, we are failing these students.

**That Gifted education matters** – if my daughter had not gone to St. Justin Martyr– and had not competed in a science fair – she would not have discovered that she is an exceptional scientist. Her marks would have totally steered her away from science and towards the arts. Science fair and her PACE teachers gave her a passion for science, excitement about her future and evidence that this was something she could excel at – despite the information she was getting from her grades.

Neurodiverse students are beautiful, sensitive souls. Unique thinkers who can change the world. Yet too many drop out of school or do not pursue post secondary education because the feedback they get from their grades in school is “I’m not good enough”, “I’m less-than”, or “I’m broken.”

So how we can design curricula or use Universal Design for Learning to appropriately lift them up and challenge their unique minds? How can we give them the acceleration opportunities they deserve, and ignite their passions and interests so they never give up on their dreams? These are questions worth asking.

In Grade 2 – our daughter wrote this in an assignment:

“I really like science. I also like recess. I would also like to learn about drawing, dogs and looking at small things under a microscope.”

Today, at 19, she works at one of the top protein research labs in Canada.

The PACE program unwrapped the gifts of our child – and we could not be more grateful. Dreams can come true.

**YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**REPORT NO. 2024: 11**

**To: Regular Board Meeting**

**November 26, 2024**

A meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee was held on **November 11, 2024** in a hybrid format in person at the CEC, 320 Bloomington Rd. W and virtually over Google meet.

**PRESENT:**

Committee Members:	N, Byrne*, A. Connolly*, A. Grella, M. Iafrate, D. Legris, S. Leckey*, J. Man*, N. Welch*, Y. Zhou*
Association Representatives:	M. Marcello*, C. Sandig*
Administration:	L.Lausic, J. Powers, E. Strano*
Regrets:	A.Carter, A.Cabraja, M. Xue
Recording	C. Mong*
Guests:	S. Bondy, <i>Transition Planner/Work Experience Teacher YCDSB</i> L. Colangelo*, <i>Special Education Assistive Technology Planner, YCDSB</i> M. Prinzo*, <i>Mental Health Manager, YCDSB</i> F. Teran Enriquez, <i>CO-OP student, YCDSB</i>

*\*Denotes Virtual attendance*

**1. ACTION ITEM(S): NIL**

**2. CORRESPONDENCE: NIL**

**3. PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS/INFORMATION:**

- Parent Education & Awareness Campaign
- SEA Guideline changes
- Special Incident Portion (SIP) Process update
- Special Education Transition to Highschool
- Student Services November 2024 Updates

**4. ASSOCIATION REPORTS:**

- Autism Ontario: Pathways to Special Education Support
- LDAYS: SOAR programs, registration is now opened

**5. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA:**

- 2024-2025 SEAC Vote
- Mental Health Department Updates
- Intensive response Team Presentation

**6. NEXT MEETING: December 16, 2024**

A. GRELLA, CHAIR, SEAC

November 6, 2024

Linda Lacroix, Registrar and CEO  
Office of the Register  
Ontario College of Teachers

Sent via email: llacroix@oct.ca

Dear Linda Lacroix,

The Limestone District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) would like to bring forward several concerns related to the current state of teacher training at Ontario's Teacher Colleges, particularly in the area of Special Education. We also recognize that many of these concerns are consistent across the province.

While the current teacher education curriculum typically includes courses on pedagogy, curriculum development, assessment and evaluation, classroom management, and educational psychology, there is a noticeable underemphasis on the importance of special education training. Moreover, there is a clear lack of consistency across Ontario's Teacher Colleges in delivering this essential learning.

Our concerns are rooted in several key areas. First, there is a lack of comprehensive special education training in initial teacher education programs. Despite the diversity of learners in Ontario classrooms, teachers are not receiving consistent preparation in this vital area. Furthermore, Ontario's classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse, both culturally and in terms of student learning needs, and teachers must be adequately prepared to address this wide range of abilities. Unfortunately, data from the LDSB student census indicates that students with special education needs continue to face significant academic and social challenges, often due to teachers' limited knowledge and training in this area. Compounding this issue, the limited number of Professional Activity (PA) Days available for ongoing professional development restricts the opportunities for teachers to focus on special education once they are in the field.

Addressing these concerns is essential. Research consistently shows that teachers who receive formal special education training are more effective in supporting students with disabilities, leading to better outcomes for these students. Additionally, such training equips teachers to implement Individual Education Plans (IEPs) more effectively and differentiate instruction to meet the diverse needs of all students. Teachers with comprehensive special education training are also more likely to foster inclusive, supportive learning environments that benefit not only students with special education needs but all students in the classroom.

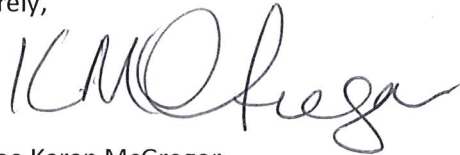
Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional  
territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee.

Robin Hutcheon, Chair | Krishna Burra, Director of Education and Secretary | Craig Young, Treasurer

[See Yourself in Limestone](#)

The LDSB SEAC strongly encourages the Ontario College of Teachers, in consultation with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Education, to ensure that special education training becomes a core component of all teacher preparation programs in Ontario. We believe this programming should be responsive to the evolving needs of Ontario students, with regular review and oversight by special education experts, both at the Teacher College level and within schools themselves. By doing so, we can help ensure that all new teachers enter the profession equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to support students with special education needs from their very first day in the classroom.

Sincerely,



Trustee Karen McGregor,  
Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee

cc: Jill Dunlop, Minister of Education  
Nolan Quinn, Minister of Colleges and Universities  
Stephanie Donaldson, OPSBA Executive Director  
Chairs of Ontario School Boards' Special Education Advisory Committees

**Meeting Highlights**  
**Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE)**  
**June 4, 2024**

**Welcome and Opening Remarks – Peggy Blair, MACSE Chair**

- The Chair welcomed the members and reminded them of their obligations regarding confidentiality and conflict of interest.
- Three members have been reappointed since the last meeting: Katheryne Hoffschmidt representing Teachers, Leah Kim Brighton representing Speech Language Pathologists, and Lori Laroche representing Social Workers.

**Special Education Update - Charmaine Perera (Director, Special Education/Success for All Branch)**

- Highlights of the recent [funding announcement for 2024-25](#) were presented, including the restructuring of funding allocations, the new funding approach for the Specialized Equipment Allocation, and Responsive Education Programs (formerly PPF).

**Natalie Pierre, MPP- Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education**

- Natalie Pierre expressed appreciation on behalf of the Minister for the Council's advice as it continues to inform the work of the ministry. She noted the following recent announcements: [Funding for 2024-25](#), and cellphone use and vaping in schools ([PPM 128](#)).

**Artificial Intelligence and the Education Sector - Peggy Blair, MACSE Chair**

- MACSE members shared information gathered from their constituencies and were invited to discuss opportunities and considerations for the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the special education sector. A roll-up of MACSE advice will be provided to the Minister of Education for consideration.

**The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct (Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 128) – Patrick Byam, Director, Safe and Healthy Schools**

- An overview of revisions to [PPM 128](#) was provided, including:
  - Restrictions on the use of personal mobile devices
  - Vaping and nicotine products are not to be used while at school
  - Ensuring that school boards enforce the standards of the Provincial Code of Conduct including an update on the standards of behaviour

**Comments:**

- Members supported the proposed restrictions on the use of personal mobile devices and the ban on vaping and nicotine products in schools, and asked about consequences if a student is found vaping or smoking on school property.
- Members were pleased to hear exemptions on mobile devices are maintained where an educator has approved their use in the classroom.
- Members expressed concern regarding consistency in application of legislative and policy requirements within and across school boards.

**Student Mental Health - Shirley Carder (Director) Venetta Miranda (Manager), and Marianne Roaldi (Senior Policy Adviser) – Mental Health Branch. Theresa Kennedy, Deanna Swift, and Gillian Gray – School Mental Health Ontario**

- The team provided an overview of two Mental Health Literacy Modules for Career Studies (GLC20) and discussed the development of parent/guardian focused resources (webinars, information sheet and newsletters).
- Members were asked for advice on how best to support students with special education needs with the implementation of the Mental Health Literacy modules for Career Studies.
- The GLC20 is a mandatory course that must be taken to obtain an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). These modules will be teacher led because the teacher knows the students. Special education supports are specifically designed so that they are available to all students regardless of learning pathway or special education need.

### **Community Collaboration**

Members discussed the community collaboration submissions from their constituencies.

### **Updating French-language terminology for Special Education - Julie Boudreault (Manager) and Gyula Kovacs (Senior Policy and Programs Advisor) – French-Language Education, Policies and Programs Branch**

- In the Spring of 2023, the Ministry of Education (EDU) proposed to update specific French-language terminology regarding special education in the *Education Act* and the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*.
- Bill 98 amended this legislation to change the French-language terminology regarding special education from “enfance en difficulté” to “éducation spécialisée”

Comments:

- Members welcomed the change as it will help remove the stigma faced by students with special education needs and their families.

### **Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Update - Dan Koenig (Chief Executive Officer), Joanne Rinella (Director Assessment and Reporting), Jennifer Hove (Director Data and Reporting), Derek Chen (Chief Equity and Assessment Officer), Geordie Gibbon (Program Manager Outreach)**

- The team provided an update including:
  - The 2023-2024 assessment results for students including students with special education needs.
  - The E-Assessment Platform – Making EQAO Assessments Accessible for all Students
  - The EQAO Data Reporting Tool that is designed to engage school teams in analyzing EQAO results and helps highlight disproportionate outcomes for students with special education needs at school, board, and provincial levels.
  - EQAO Student Engagement Committee (ESEC)

### **Closing Remarks – Peggy Blair, MACSE Chair**

- The Chair extended thanks to ministry staff who continue to support MACSE’s work and the preparation of meetings.



# Minister's Advisory Council On Special Education

## Annual Report

For the Fiscal Year ended March 31, 2024

**Ministry of Education**

Minister's Advisory Council  
on Special Education  
315 Front Street West, 12F  
Toronto ON M7A 0B8

**Ministère de l'Éducation**

Conseil consultatif ministériel de  
l'éducation de l'enfance en difficulté  
315, rue Front Ouest, 12 étage  
Toronto (Ontario) M7A 0B8

May 13, 2024

The Honourable Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education  
438 University Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Lecce,

Please accept the attached Annual Report on the activities of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (the Council) for the fiscal year 2023-2024.

The Council met on June 21 and November 7, 2023, and February 27, 2024. During our three meetings, the Council participated in discussions and offered advice related to several areas that affect students with special education needs. We also appreciate that during your 58 months as Minister you have made 33 appointments or re-appointments to the Council. We note, however, that there were 7 vacancies (as of March 31, 2024) among the 20 voting members of MACSE. Stakeholders continue to be restive about the number of vacancies and particularly those seats vacant for long periods. We urge you to fill them, and future vacancies, as quickly as possible.

We look forward to continuing our work with you and ministry staff to support the special education needs of students in Ontario.

Yours sincerely,

Peggy Blair  
Chair

c: Kate Manson-Smith, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education  
Clayton La Touche, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education

## **Mandate and Structure of the Council**

The Council advises the Minister of Education on any matter related to the establishment and provision of special education programs and services for exceptional students, including the identification and provision of early intervention programs for students with special education needs.

The Advisory Committee on Special Education was established in 1974 and has been renewed continually from that date. Its name was later changed to the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE). The Council:

- responds to proposals or positions of the Ministry of Education or other ministries, as submitted to the council, from time to time;
- identifies concerns in the delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils and provides information, advice and recommendations for ministry consideration; and
- meets up to three times a year for a maximum of 4½ days per year.

MACSE's membership includes the following representation:

- one seat for each of nine exceptionalities;
- one seat for each of nine educator and professional categories;
- one seat for students/youth;
- one seat for Indigenous communities;
- one non-voting seat for the Ministry of Colleges and Universities;
- one non-voting seat for the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services;
- one non-voting seat for the Ministry of Health; and
- two representatives each for the Francophone and Roman Catholic communities, appointed from among the members above.

Representatives of a constituency on the Council are normally appointed for an initial term of up to three years and may be re-appointed for combined service of up to six years. When directed by the Minister's office, the ministry will issue a call for applications to organizations with an interest in special education in the areas related to existing and/or upcoming vacancies. Individuals who wish to be considered are required to apply through the Public Appointment Secretariat (PAS), which then provides the application profiles to the ministry. The applications are then reviewed, and qualified candidates submitted for the Minister's decision.

## **Changes to MACSE Membership**

The following new members joined the Council:

- Judith Brown (Principals) on November 3, 2023
- Amy Fee (Autism) on November 3, 2023
- Charlene VanderGriendt (Physical Disability) on November 3, 2023
- Sue Wilson (Trustees) on August 30, 2023

The following members retired/resigned from the Council:

- Judy Carter (Indigenous Communities) on April 7, 2023
- Patricia Sky (Educational Assistants) on November 11, 2023

The membership of MACSE as of March 31, 2024, is provided in Appendix I.

## **Activities in 2023-2024**

MACSE's mandate is to advise the Minister of Education on matters related to the establishment and provision of special education programs and services for students with special education needs. In 2023-2024, the Council participated in discussions and offered advice related to several areas that affect students with special education needs:

- *Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023*
- Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Modernization Initiative
- Developmental Disabilities Pilot: Student Transitions
- Disability Training
- Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Update
- Grades 7 and 8 Mental Health Literacy Modules
- New Language Curriculum
- Preschool Speech and Language and Children's Rehabilitation Services Guidelines
- Provincial Schools for the Deaf
- Update to the Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol
- Student Achievement Plan
- Special Incidence Portion (SIP) and Special Equipment Amount (SEA) Review

Members of the Council also engage their constituencies and bring information forward about successes, challenges, effective practices, and suggestions to the Council through the standing agenda item on Community Collaboration. The information brought forward by MACSE members informs the policy and operational work of the ministry.

## **Resolution – MACSE Vacancies**

At its meeting on June 21, 2023, MACSE adopted the following resolution as advice to the Minister:

Whereas MACSE's deliberations and advice benefit from a full Council to bring a rich range of voices to the table; and

Whereas persistent long-term vacancies on MACSE have been a problem for several years;

Be it resolved that MACSE call on the Minister of Education to ensure that vacancies are filled on a timely basis and that seats on Council are not left vacant for more than four months.

## **Priorities for 2024-2025**

In 2024-2025, the Council will continue to advise the Minister on priorities.

MACSE will also respond to ad-hoc requests for advice to the Ministry of Education, as well as other ministries and agencies of the government. We will continue to work with ministry staff to ensure that advice is provided in a timely fashion to support the ongoing policy and operational work of the government.

Council members will also continue to undertake outreach to their constituencies to gather information about effective practices, challenges, opportunities, and suggestions in advance of each Council meeting.

## **Expenditure in 2023-2024**

Members of MACSE serve as unpaid volunteers. Meetings have been held virtually, limiting costs for the period to translation and accessibility compliance of documents. Total expenditure in 2023-2024 was \$5,834.21.

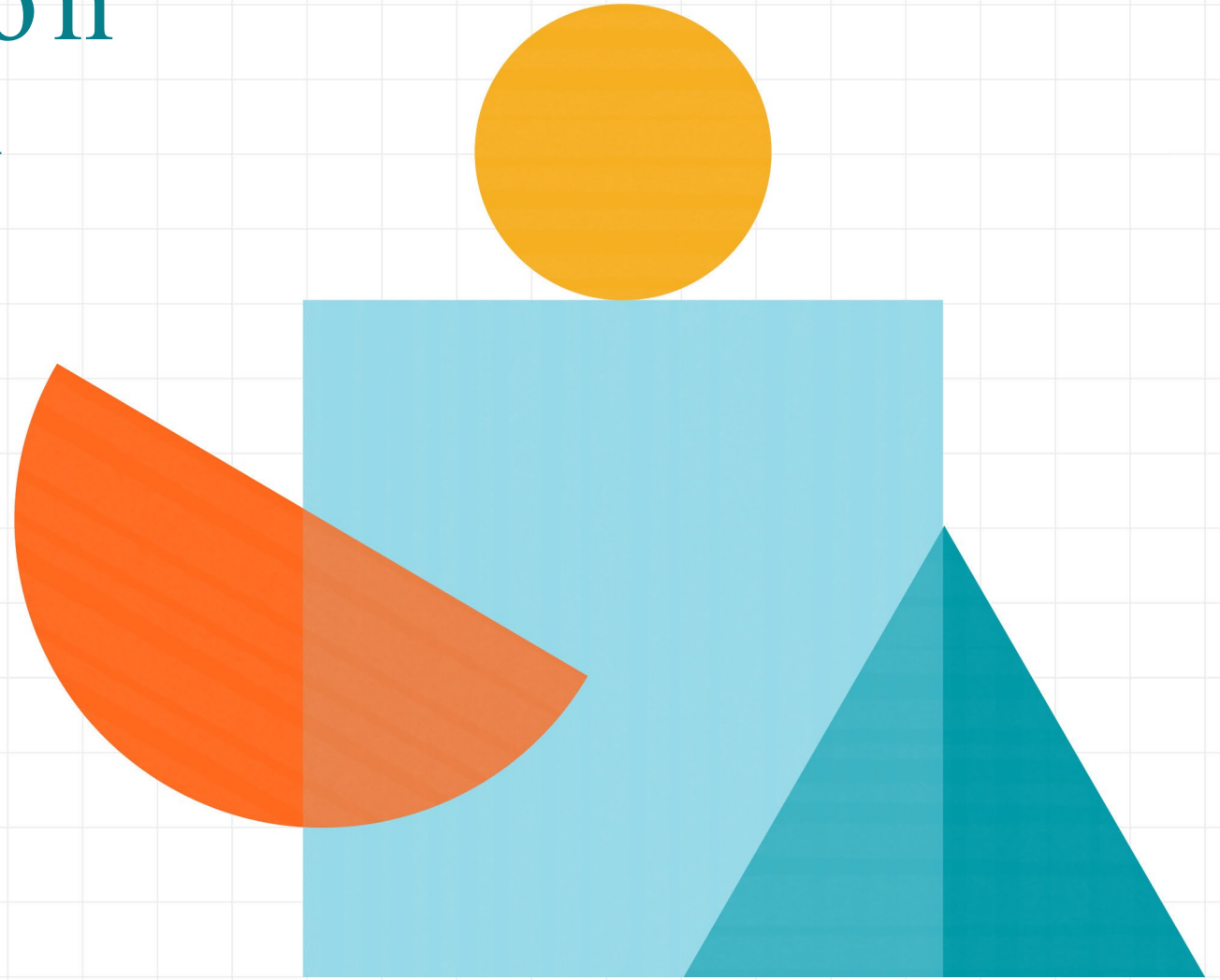
## Appendix I

### Members of the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education March 31, 2024

<b>Sectors Represented</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Term Expiry</b>
Chair	Peggy Blair	June 12, 2025
Immediate Past Chair	Joe Trovato	June 12, 2025
<b>Exceptionalities</b>		
Autism	Amy Fee	November 2, 2025
Behavioural	Vacant	
Blind and Low Vision	Kerrie St. Jean	February 7, 2026
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Vacant	
Developmental Disability	Domenic Gentilini	March 29, 2025
Giftedness	Vacant	
Learning Disability	Lawrence Barns	October 3, 2024
Multiple Exceptionalities	Michael Jacques	February 7, 2026
Physical Disability	Charlene VanderGriendt	November 2, 2025
<b>Educator Groups</b>		
Educational Assistants	Vacant	
Principals	Judith Brown	November 2, 2025
Teachers	Katheryne Hoffschmidt	April 7, 2024
Supervisory Officers	Vacant	
Trustees	Sue Wilson	August 29, 2025
<b>Support Professionals</b>		
Medical	Anne Kawamura	August 16, 2024
Psychologists	Vacant	
Social Workers	Lorie Laroche	April 7, 2024
Speech and Language Pathologists	Leah Brighton	April 7, 2024
<b>Other</b>		
Indigenous Communities	Vacant	
Students/Youth	Bruce Yu	February 7, 2025

# Update for Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education

Fall 2024



# Agenda

- 01 General Observations
- 02 2023–2024 Achievement Results in the EQAO Reporting Tool
- 03 Outreach and Research



# Tracking Trends over Time for Students with Special Education Needs

Since the 2021–2022 school year, EQAO has collected consistent, reliable data on students with special education needs.

Three years of EQAO data allow the agency to highlight trends in outcomes for students with special education needs, highlighting a persistent disparity in outcomes for these students.

# Tracking Trends over Time for Students with Special Education Needs

## Reading, Writing and Math Achievement

- English-language reading and writing scores for students with special education needs are declining.
- French-language writing scores are also declining, while reading scores remain stable.
- English- and French-language math scores have slightly increased.
- A persistent gap remains between the achievement of students with special education needs and students who do not have special education needs.

# Tracking Trends over Time for Students with Special Education Needs

## Sense of Belonging

- At the end of each assessment, students are asked to respond to a questionnaire about their experiences at school.
- For the past three years, the results have demonstrated a persistent gap in students' sense of belonging at school.

# Live Demo of the Reporting Tool

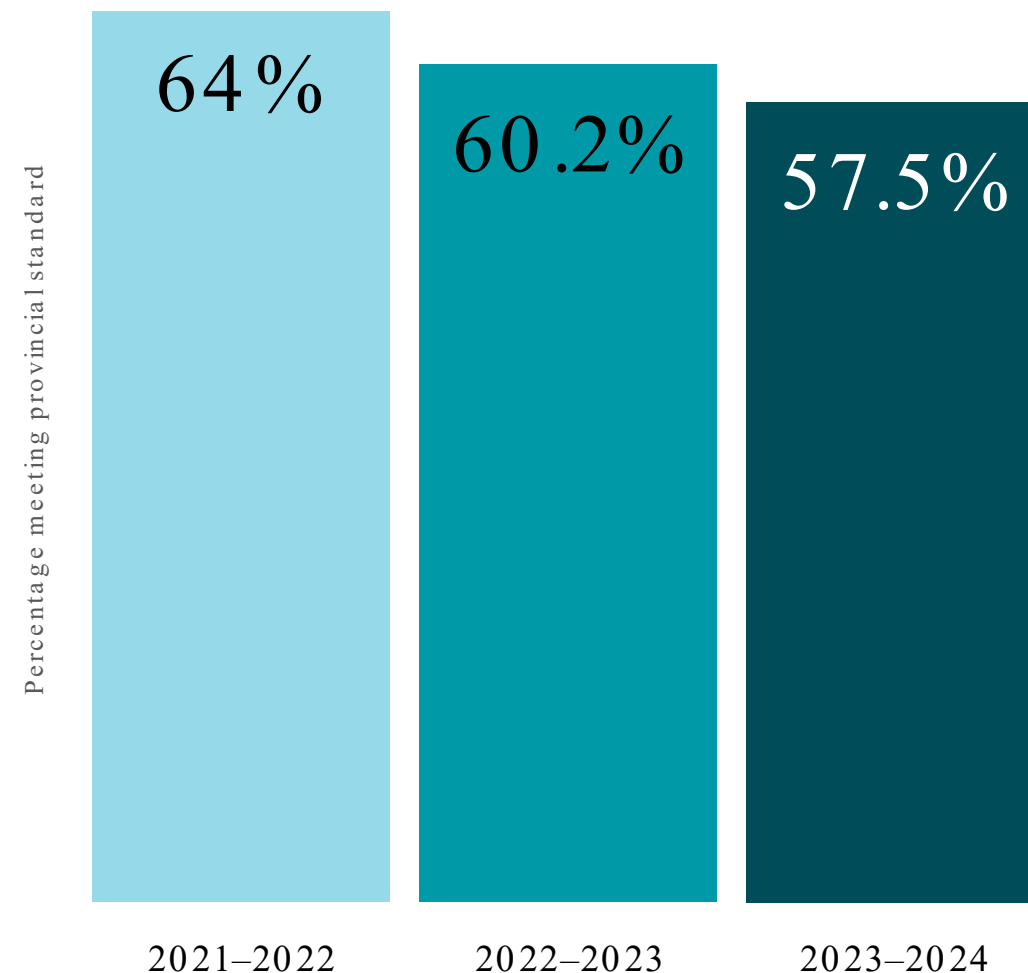


# EQAO Outreach and Stakeholder Support

EQAO's School Support and Outreach team continues to work with schools and school boards to highlight trends in EQAO data, including results related to students with special education needs.

For example, in a survey of educators who participated in EQAO's outreach sessions, 92 percent of respondents agreed that the session helped them understand how EQAO data can help identify disproportionalities or disparities for various groups of students.

English-Speaking Students with a Learning Disability,  
Results on the Reading Component of the Junior Assessment



# EQAO Outreach and Stakeholder Support (cont'd)

→ EQAO collects reading, writing and mathematics data for students with various exceptionalities.

→ EQAO is pleased to collaborate with other stakeholder organizations to support students with special education needs.

Contact [info@eqao.com](mailto:info@eqao.com).

# EQAO Research Partnership with OISE

EQAO is collaborating with OISE graduate students on research to help schools and boards improve outcomes for students with special education needs.

The Grade 6 reading results for students with learning disabilities will be the initial focus.

- The project will begin with descriptive statistics but may evolve to include other statistical analysis.
- The goal is to investigate practices that have a positive effect on students with special education needs.

# Thank you





Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

# Ontario Autism Program

Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) Meeting  
November 7, 2024

# Overview

- 1 Context
- 2 Progress Achieved
- 3 AccessOAP
- 4 Entry to School Program

# Context: Overview of the Ontario Autism Program

Significant implementation progress has been made with all elements of the OAP now operational and available, giving families access to a range of services and supports previously unavailable in the program.



## Entry to School Program

Six-month **group-based skill-building program** to help young children (3-6 years of age) prepare to enter kindergarten or grade one for the first time, followed by up to six months of transition supports after school entry.



## Foundational Family Services

Services available to all families registered in the OAP that **build family capacity** to support their child's learning and development.



## Care Coordination

Support for families throughout their journey by providing **orientation to the program, service planning and navigation**, and help with managing transitions.



## Caregiver-mediated Early Years Programs

Available for up to six months, **to help young children (12 to 48 months of age) learn new skills** and meet individualized goals in the areas of social communication and play and build caregiver capacity to support their children.



## Urgent Response Services

Time-limited services intended to respond rapidly to **a specific need and prevent further escalation, risk of harm to self, others and/or property.**

## Core Clinical Services and Supports

Services include **Applied Behaviour Analysis, Occupational Therapy, Speech Language Pathology, Mental Health Services**, technology and other supports, delivered by qualified professionals.

## Context: Overview of the OAP cont'd

As part of the Ontario Autism Program, additional program elements to support consistent, coordinated, and high-quality services and supports include:



A provincial **independent intake organization (AccessOAP)** provides a single point of access for families and administers several key functions of the OAP including intake and registration, management of the provincial registration list, care coordination and service navigation, funding allocation and reconciliation, and an independent review process.



**Capacity Building:** A workforce capacity building plan to develop a service system that is more responsive to families, including Workforce Capacity grants to build and support a skilled workforce.



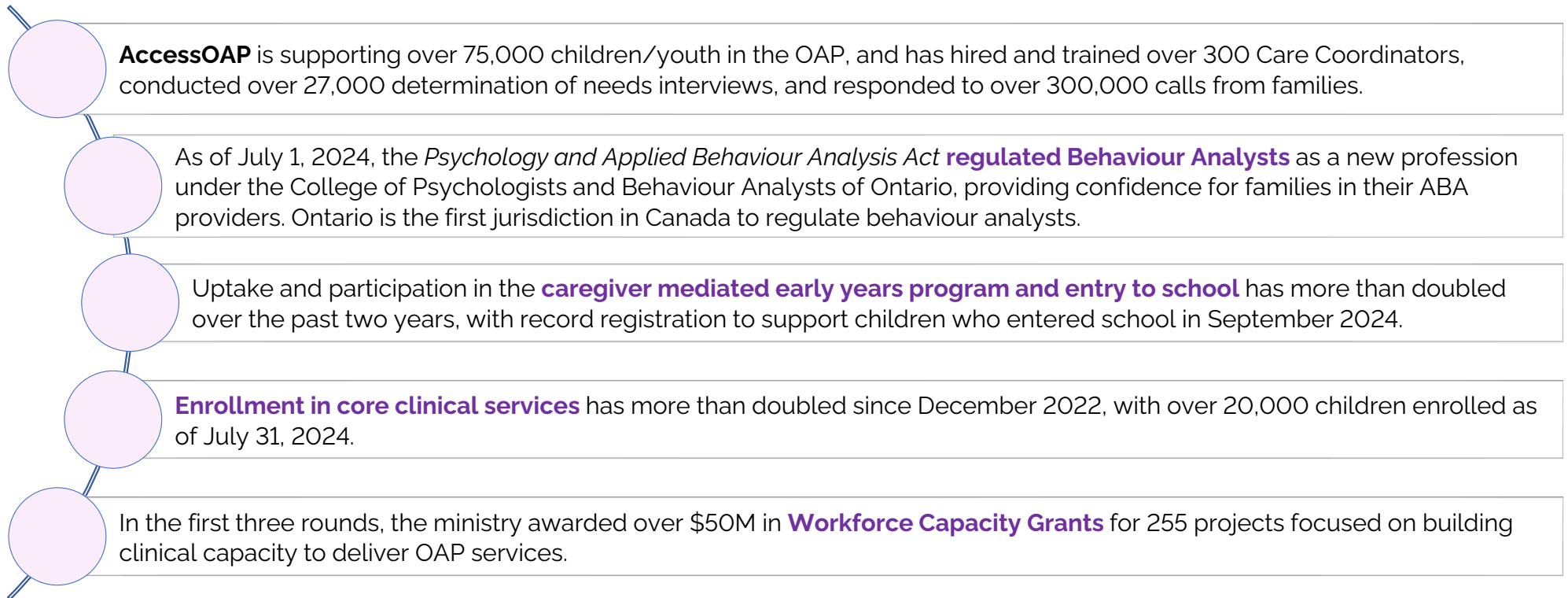
**Strengthening oversight** by regulating behaviour analysts as a new profession under the College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario and expanding and promoting the OAP Provider List of qualified clinicians to promote consistency, professionalism, and safe, high-quality services.

The ministry also funds additional autism services that support children and youth on the autism spectrum and their families, including diagnostic hubs, school supports, and respite programs.

Families can also access other special needs services, such as children's rehabilitation and healthy child development programs, as well as supports through the education system.

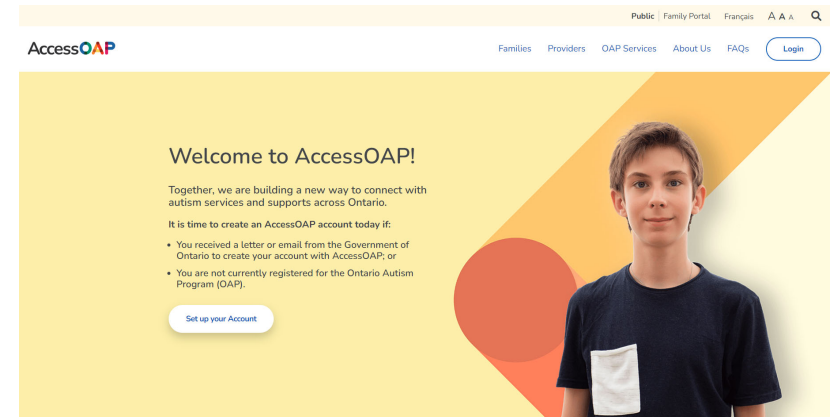
# Progress Achieved

Highlights from the past year include:



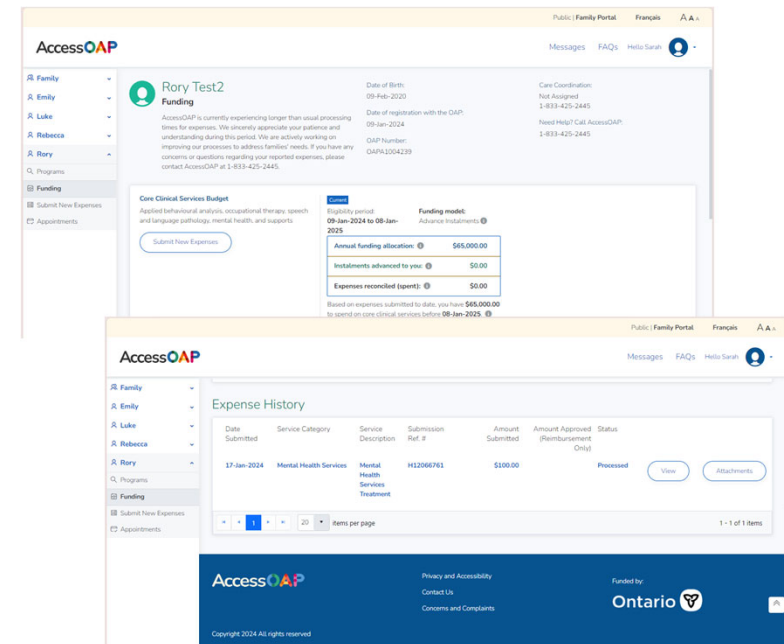
# Implementation of AccessOAP<sup>Text</sup>

- “**AccessOAP**” launched in April 2022 with the goal of delivering a more streamlined, family-focused and modernized approach to service delivery for the OAP.
- AccessOAP provides a single point of access for families and administrators. Several key functions of the OAP include:
  - Intake and registration
  - Care coordination and service navigation
  - Core clinical services funding allocation and reconciliation
  - Independent review process
- AccessOAP is delivered by a consortium of partners, led by **Accerta Services Inc.** and including Autism Ontario, McMaster University, and Serefin.
- **Accerta Services Inc.** specializes in providing eligibility determination and claims management for government programs. In addition to leading AccessOAP, Accerta also supports claims management for Healthy Smiles Ontario, Ontario Works, and Ontario Disability Support Program.



# Implementation of AccessOAP cont'd

- In an effort to deliver a more streamlined, family-focused and modernized approach to service delivery for the OAP, AccessOAP has:
  - Launched an **online family portal**, which allows families to:
    - Register for the OAP or transition their data from the Ministry.
    - View eligibility for programs, such as entry to school.
    - Receive an invitation for core clinical services, book a determination of needs appointment, and manage their funding.
  - Implemented **direct bank deposit** for core clinical services funding to ensure timely receipt of funds for families.
  - Made available **online forms** for registering concerns or complaints.
  - Launched a **call centre** so that someone is always available to answer questions from families.



# Entry to School Program

The entry to school program helps children develop school-readiness skills and provides transition supports as they enter kindergarten or Grade 1. To be eligible children must **be registered in the OAP**, be **between 3-6 years old**, and be **starting school for the first time**.

The program includes **two** main parts:

The first part is a 6-month, half-day group-based, skill-building program, focused on helping children develop school-readiness skills in six areas:

- 1) **Communication** – such as conversation, expressing wants and needs, understanding words and language, social communication, and non-verbal communication.
- 2) **Play** – such as toy exploration and engaging in group play/games.
- 3) **Social interaction** – such as understanding of social boundaries, interactions with peers, and learning new behaviours by observing/imitating peers.
- 4) **Functional routines** – such as following classroom routines, and self-help skills like dressing and toilet training.
- 5) **Behavioural self-management** – such as emotional regulation and being able to wait their turn.
- 6) **Pre-academics, learning and attention** – such as developing new learning skills, working within a group setting, and independent work.

After completing the group-based part of the program, children start the second part of the program, which provides them with individual transition supports as they enter school. Families and educators can access consultation services from entry to school program staff, as needed, during a child's first 6 months in school.



# ETS Program: Role of School Boards

- As children finish the first part of the program, both entry to school staff and school board/school-based staff work with the family to support the transition to school.
- The joint school-based transition team may include the school principal or designate, relevant school/school board staff, OAP entry to school staff, families, and any other relevant professionals involved with the child. The joint transition team will identify a lead to coordinate the transition process, based on local transition processes.

## School-Based Transition Team

As outlined in Policy/Program Memorandum 140, Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), school board staff are expected to work with parents and community agencies to plan for a successful transition. For students entering from the Entry to School Program, this collaboration includes:

- **Working with the family, entry to school team and community providers** to identify a child's strengths and needs and to set goals for the transition process;
- **Sharing information about the child's progress** with other members of the joint transition team to inform planning;
- **Supporting the implementation of the transition plan in the classroom**, with access to resources/consultation provided by the ETS program staff where needed. Plans will include individualized and flexible supports that could be offered by the school and/or community agencies.
- **Using information** obtained through the development of the child's transition plan to inform the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP), where appropriate.

# What Are We Learning As We Implement ETS?

The entry to school program has supported children in their transition into school and we have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from families. As the sector continues to adapt, and with the availability of increased feedback from families and service providers, we continue to gain a better understanding of several factors impacting the program, including:



## Demand

- Demand for the ETS program has increased significantly over the past two years.
- Annual spring registrations have more than doubled since the program began in March 2022.
- It is expected that interest in, and demand for, ETS will continue as eligible children and families register for the OAP.



## Service Delivery Methods

- Service providers are given flexibility to implement the program in a way that best reflects the needs of their community, while working within the program guidelines.
- Some families have expressed that travel to the group-based program can be challenging, particularly in the North and in larger geographical areas. Some providers are considering alternative service delivery methods to overcome these unique challenges.



## Complexity of Needs

- Service providers have expressed that children with complex needs may require additional supports.
- Providers are assessing their capacity and service delivery models to enroll children who require higher levels of support.



## School Boards

- School boards are key partners in the implementation of the program and play an integral role in supporting students to transition from the ETS program to school.
- Transition teams can vary by community and are based on local school board transition processes.

# Appendix: Feedback from Families

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Information collected from families about their experiences with OAP services has shown positive outcomes:

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- ✓ "The program [*Caregiver Mediated Early Years*] has helped us to better understand our son's communication style and most importantly ways to socially interact with him. We look forward to these sessions. Our son is now helping to dress himself. He is enjoying social interaction when he is eating. Our son and daughter are learning to play with each other. This program equips all family members with valuable learning".
- ✓ "We LOVE the Entry to School program! Our child is excelling in it. Routine and skill building are so important for him and September is going to be here before we know it. We can't imagine the scenario where he didn't have this program to go to. Thank you!"
- ✓ "When I reached out to [*Urgent Response Services*], I was so relieved when there was a plan that was very quickly put into motion and before I knew it, I had an entire team supporting my child and our family. This meant she would have help with her behaviour at home and at school and she was going to have help with her mental well being as well, which is something we'd never been able to tap into before"
- ✓ "So I just finished up tricky transitions today, and I'm not sure whose idea it was to run a program [*foundational family services*] like that, but it was amazing, and the other mom who was there, she noticed a huge difference with her son as well using the techniques, ...it was absolutely amazing."

# MACSE November Meeting – Kindergarten Update

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## **Purpose**

- To provide an update on the ministry's commitment to issue updates to the learning in The Kindergarten Program (2016), to ensure that students are fully prepared for a strong start to their educational journey and to make a seamless transition into Grade 1.

## **Background / Overview of Current Context**

- As announced in January 2024, the ministry is introducing new mandatory learning as part of the kindergarten curriculum, for implementation in September 2025.
- The new mandatory kindergarten learning will focus on early literacy skills, and the foundations for math and STEM education to align with learning in the recently revised Grade 1 language, math and science and technology curriculum.
- The updated kindergarten curriculum will include evidence-based, systematic and explicit instruction of foundational knowledge and skills in early literacy and math.
- These updates will focus on the mandatory learning expectations in the kindergarten curriculum. Key features of Ontario's full-day kindergarten program, including play-based learning supported by teachers and early childhood educators remain unchanged.

# MACSE November Meeting – Kindergarten Update Continued

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## Expected Outcomes

- Updates to the kindergarten curriculum will address the [Ontario Human Rights Commission \(OHRC\) Right to Read report](#) that emphasized the importance of phonics instruction, more explicit instruction in schools, and other actions to ensure all students build a solid literacy foundation beginning in kindergarten.
- In addition, the updates to the curriculum will ensure alignment and a clear progression of learning with the new elementary Mathematics, Language/Français, Science and Technology curriculum to enable students to build stronger foundational skills, including in reading, writing and math.

## Current Status

- In May 2024, the ministry invited education stakeholders, partners and experts, including MACSE, to participate in the information gathering stage of curriculum review, to inform updates to the kindergarten curriculum. The ministry is currently reviewing feedback received as part of this engagement.
- The ministry is working with a team of educators including Ontario Certified Teachers and Registered Early Childhood Educators with recent experience and expertise in Kindergarten. These external writers have been contracted to work on the curriculum, with selection based on a number of criteria, including subject and curriculum expertise; regional and school board representation; diverse teaching experiences, including teaching students with special education needs; understanding of the principles of Universal Design for Learning; diverse abilities, lived experiences and perspectives; expertise in Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing.

## Questions / Discussion

- What is important for the ministry to consider as we undertake this important work for our early learners?
- What is top of mind for you/your members related to this work?
- What could the ministry consider in the development of resources to support the implementation of the updated kindergarten curriculum?



## Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association

**DATE:** November 19, 2024

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Chairpersons and Directors of Education  
- All Catholic District School Boards

**CC:** OCSTA Directors and Staff  
Board Secretaries and Administrative Assistants

**FROM:** Steve Andrews, Director of Legislative and Political Affairs

**SUBJECT:** Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE)

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Please see the attached document from the November meeting of MACSE. As you know, Mrs. Sue Wilson, Chair of the Eastern Ontario CDSB is the Trustee representative on the Council. We want thank Mrs. Wilson for her dedication to students with special educational needs and her tireless work on Council.

Attached are the following documents that may be of specific interest to your special education superintendents:

- Highlights of the June 2024 meeting
- EQAO update
- Kindergarten update from the Ministry
- Ontario Autism Program update
- 2023-2024 Annual Report from the Council.

OCSTA will send my separate memorandum the information template to be completed by your Special Education Advisory Committees prior to the next meeting in March 2025 shortly.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly at [sandrews@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:sandrews@ocsta.on.ca)

Sincerely,

Steve Andrews



## Join Us on Tuesday, January 14th at 7:00 p.m. Virtual Zoom Presentation

Join Karen and Ann Wolff, renowned educational experts from Wolff Educational Services, for an empowering one-hour presentation designed to help parents and educators support student success. During this presentation, Karen and Ann will address questions submitted upon registration, covering topics like IEPs, report cards, resource support, accommodations, and much more. They'll offer practical solutions and strategies for both academic achievement and emotional growth.

**Don't miss the opportunity to gain valuable insights—submit your questions when you register to ensure your concerns are addressed directly by the experts!**

**Topics may include:**

- IEP/IPRC's
- Resource Support
- Assistive Technology
- Social and Emotional
- Report Cards
- Accommodations
- Advocacy
- Learning Skills



## WOLFF EDUCATION SERVICES

We are Educational Consultants who specialize in finding school placement options in both the private and public sectors across the GTA. We have developed a needs assessment that considers the whole child - factoring in your child's academic, social and emotional areas of strength and need to determine the best school placement possible.

## Registration

For more information please contact our office:  
**info@ldays.org** or **(905) 884-7933 extension 1.**

**REGISTER HERE**



## Scan to register!





# ADHD Strategies at Home FREE ONLINE WORKSHOP WITH Andrea St. Onge

*As an adult with ADHD herself, Andrea brings a unique perspective that deeply resonates with both students and parents.*

**Join Us on Tuesday, December 10th at 7:00 p.m.  
Free Presentation via Zoom**

This presentation will explore the challenges of ADHD and offer valuable insights, along with practical strategies that parents can implement at home to effectively support their children with ADHD.



**About the Speaker:** Andrea St-Onge

With over 20 years of experience in the education field, Andrea is a dedicated Learning Specialist based in California, committed to empowering students with learning disabilities, particularly those with ADHD.

She holds a Master's of Science in Education from Niagara University and has a strong commitment to supporting diverse learners, demonstrated by her role as a Board Director for the Learning Disabilities Association of York Simcoe.

As an adult with ADHD, Andrea has a personal understanding of the challenges faced by students with executive function difficulties. She looks forward to sharing her insights and providing practical strategies to help parents support their children at home.

## Registration

For more information please contact our office:

**info@ldays.org** or **(905) 884-7933 extension 1**

Or

**Click the 'REGISTER HERE' button to sign up today!**

**REGISTER HERE**



**Scan to register!**





# Upcoming Winter Programs

## Jump Math

- 8 week math program for students age 7-13
- Curriculum-based
- Two one hour sessions per week
- Focuses on building strong foundational math skills and improving computational fluency

[Register Here](#)

## Reading Rocks

- 8 week reading program for students age 7-13
- Curriculum-based
- Two one hour sessions per week
- Focuses on building strong literacy skills through engaging, motivational strategies

[Register Here](#)

## Level Up

- Flexible program for students in grades 2-8
- Meetings are once week, for one hour, with up to 4 sessions a month
- Personalized homework assistance, help with numeracy and literacy skills, improving study habits, ect.

[Register Here](#)

All three of our tutoring programs offer virtual, 1:1 sessions with experienced tutors. Personalized to meet your child's unique needs, each program provides flexible scheduling to fit your family's routine. With limited spaces available, <sup>Text</sup>early registration ensures you secure the best timeslot for your child.

Contact Alicia for more information at 905-884-7933 ext. 6.

## Social Skills

- 6 week program for students age 7-12
- Curriculum-based
- 1 one hour sessions per week
- Focuses on social skills like communication, listening, problem solving, friendship skills, self esteem, self advocacy and more!
- Maximum 6 students per group
- Groups meet in York Region and Simcoe County

Contact Tori for more information at  
905-884-7933 ext. 4.

[Register Here](#)

## SoAR Mindful Transitions

- 4 one hour sessions.
  - 1:1 format in-person, online, or group sessions in schools.
  - Tailored resources and interactive sessions for each student, alongside a workbook that covers a wide range of topics.
  - Topics include but are not limited to self-advocacy, stress management, understanding your IEP, accessing accommodations, and much more!
- Contact Sara for more information at  
905-884-7933 ext. 3.

[Elementary](#)

[High School](#)



**For more information and to register for any of the programs below, contact Meghan at 905-884-7933 ext. 7.**

### **Parent Support Group (PSG)**

Parents and guardians are invited to join our FREE Virtual Support Group, designed to support caregivers in navigating the journey of managing their child's Learning Disabilities and/or ADHD. This monthly gathering offers a chance to connect, share experiences, and discuss emotions while strategizing for both strengths and challenges in a positive environment. The group is currently held over Zoom at 7:30pm on Thursday nights.

**[Register Here](#)**

### **Strategies For Life**

This nine-session individual counseling program is designed for youth and adults aged 16+ with Learning Disabilities (LD) and/or ADHD, focusing on the socio-emotional effects of these conditions. Participants will gain insight into their diagnosis, strengths, and challenges, while learning coping strategies for stress and anxiety, and creating action plans to navigate life's obstacles. The program aims to build resiliency and life skills, empowering individuals to thrive and achieve overall well-being.

**[Register Here](#)**

### **Job Fit**

The Job Fit program supports youth and adults 18+ with LDs and/or ADHD in exploring their interests, strengths, and areas of need to successfully pursue employment and request workplace accommodations. It helps clients gain a deeper understanding of their LDs while building confidence to enter the workforce. The program also covers post-secondary options and requirements for career advancement. Job Fit can serve as the bridge to help you close the gap between where you are now and where you want to be.

**[Register Here](#)**

### **Adult Support Group (ASG)**

Adults are invited to join our FREE Virtual Support Group, where you can connect with others who understand the challenges of living with Learning Disabilities and/or ADHD. This is a great opportunity to meet new people, share your feelings in a safe space, build self-esteem, and collaborate on problem-solving while celebrating successes. The groups is currently held over zoom at 7pm on Wednesday nights.

**[Register Here](#)**

## **SEAC Reps - LDAYS Monthly Report - December 2024**

A note from the Learning Disabilities Association of York-Simcoe: Holiday Closure.  
LDAYS will be closed from Monday, December 23rd 2024 - Monday, January 6th 2025. We will reopen on Tuesday, January 7th 2025 at 9am.

### **Upcoming Events: (Please see attached Flyer)**

**LDAYS Virtual Presentation - ADHD Strategies at Home presented by the insightful Andrea St. Onge.** This presentation will explore the challenges of ADHD and offer valuable insights, along with practical strategies that parents can implement at home to effectively support their children with ADHD. This presentation will be held on December 10th, 2024, 7:00PM, via Zoom.

**Registration Link:** <https://form-can.keela.co/ADHDStrategiesathome>

**LDAYS Virtual Presentation - Ask an Expert, An Hour with an Educational Consultant presented by Karen and Ann Wolff.** Join educational experts Karen and Ann Wolff from Wolff Educational Services for an hour of insights on supporting student success. They'll address your questions about IEPs, report cards, resource support, accommodations, and more, while emphasizing personalized strategies for academic and emotional growth. This presentation will be held on January 14th, 2025, 7:00PM, via Zoom.

**Registration Link:** <https://form-can.keela.co/ask-the-expert1>

### **Upcoming Programs and Services: (Please see attached Flyer)**

#### **Social Skills (Registration Open Now)**

Supporting children to gain and enhance their social and emotional development. The **Social Skills Program** is designed for children ages 7 to 12 with a primary diagnosis of Learning Disabilities (LD) and/or ADHD, focusing on the development of essential social skills through interactive activities based on the PEERS® curriculum. Participants will learn interpersonal communication, emotional coping, conflict resolution, self-advocacy, and self-esteem, in small groups of up to six children. The six-week program aims to build confidence and foster connections among peers. Financial support options, including subsidies, are available for qualifying families.

Winter Session:

- **Richmond Hill:** January 20th - March 3rd
- **Newmarket:** January 21st - February 25th
- **Essa County (Subsidized):** February 5th - March 12th
- Click [here](#) for more information and to register

#### **Level Up Tutoring (Registration Open)**

Personalized virtual tutoring tailored for kids with learning disabilities and ADHD! Our one-to-one sessions focus on literacy and numeracy, helping students catch up or get ahead in their curriculum. With engaging activities and individualized support, we create a positive

learning opportunity that fosters confidence. Plus, we offer flexible weekly sessions to fit your family's schedule, including homework help. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

### **Reading Rocks and Jump Math (Registrations Open)**

**Reading Rocks** and **Jump Math** are individualized virtual intervention programs designed for students aged 8-14 who are significantly behind in literacy or math due to diagnosed learning disabilities. Reading Rocks focuses on enhancing reading skills through tailored instruction and motivational tactics, while Jump Math emphasizes foundational math skills and confidence-building through 1-to-1 or small group sessions and engaging activities. Both programs run for eight weeks, meeting twice weekly, with a fee structure that includes options for subsidies. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

### **SoAR (Registration Open)**

The **SOAR Transitions Program** is designed for students in Grades 7-8 or Grades 11-12 diagnosed with Learning Disabilities and/or ADHD, helping them develop vital life skills for academic and vocational success. The program includes tailored sessions focusing on personal development, self-advocacy, stress management, study strategies, and essential job skills, empowering participants to navigate their transitions into high school and post-secondary education or the workforce. Through engaging discussions and activities, students enhance self-awareness and build practical skills to achieve their goals confidently. Groups and 1-to-1 sessions available. Click [here](#) for more information about the elementary program and to register. Click [here](#) for more information about the high school program and to register.

### **Top inquiries from parents:**

- When changing schools boards, are there similar resources and accommodations across different school boards and how to figure out what school is best suited for my child with an LD/ADHD diagnosis
- How to help children with motivation
- How to help children with emotional regulation skills

**Thank you for your ongoing support, we appreciate all of the hard work you do!**



## YCDSB SEAC Meeting Dates 2024-2025

September 16, 2024

October 21, 2024

November 11, 2024

December 16, 2024

January 13, 2025

February 10, 2025

March 3, 2025

April 7, 2025

May 5, 2025

June 9, 2025

*Meeting date changes made in red*



Learning Together in Christ  
Engaging, Enabling, Empowering