

## SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**June 11, 2025**

### Public Meeting

#### Roll Call:

|                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| <b>Trustees:</b>                    | <b>Members:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| T. Lloyd<br>K. McGregor, Regrets    | <p><b>Present:</b></p> <p>A. Martin, Member-at-Large (Queen's University)<br/>Z. Rogers, Community Living Kingston<br/>H. Simson, Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston<br/>E. Clow, Member-at-Large<br/>K. Hill, Member-at-Large<br/>H. Clark, Autism Ontario</p> <p><b>Regrets:</b></p> <p>C. Lord, Epilepsy South Eastern Ontario<br/>L. Clouthier, Easter Seals Ontario<br/>J. Barker, Lennox &amp; Addington Resources for Children</p>                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Invitees:</b>                    | <b>Staff:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                     | <p><b>Present:</b></p> <p>S. Gillam, Superintendent of Education, Learning for All<br/>M. Blackburn, Principal of Educational Services<br/>W. Fisher, Educational Services and Safe Schools Lead<br/>C. Snider, Special Education Program Coordinator<br/>M. Aylsworth, Special Education Program Coordinator<br/>M. West, Special Education Program Coordinator<br/>L. Conboy, Mental Health Lead<br/>J. Lalonde, Special Education Program Coordinator<br/>N. Dillard, Vice-Principal of Educational Services<br/>T. Bonham-Carter, Special Education Program Coordinator</p> |
| <b>Recorder:</b>                    | <b>Guests:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| J. Senior, Administrative Assistant | <p>C. Young, Superintendent of Corporate and Staff Services<br/>P. Carson, Manager of Financial Services<br/>D. Thompson, Principal</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

#### Limestone District School Board

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

## 1. WELCOME

Co-Chair Andrea Martin called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Co-Chair Andrea Martin read the Acknowledgement of Territory:

“The Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee. We acknowledge their enduring presence on this land, as well as the presence of Métis, Inuit, and other First Nations from across Turtle Island. We honour their cultures and celebrate their commitment to this land.”

Superintendent Scot Gillam introduced Deborah Thompson to SEAC members as the incoming Principal of Educational Services for the 2025–2026 school year. She will be succeeding Principal Mike Blackburn, who will transition to an Associate Superintendent role in September 2025

## 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

*MOVED BY: Member-at- Large Erin Clow that the agenda be approved. Carried.*

## 3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None at this time.

## 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*MOVED BY Member-at-Large Erin Clow that the April 16, 2025, and May 22, 2025, Minutes be approved. Carried.*

## 5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None at this time.

## 6. EDUCATION SERVICES UPDATE

**6.1 Presentation: Special Education Budget Review** – Craig Young, Superintendent of Corporate and Staff Services and Paula Carson, Manager of Financial Services shared an in-depth report on the Special Education Budget for the 2025-2026 school year.

**6.2 Educational Services Monitoring and Operational Plan 2024-2025 Update** – Principal Michael Blackburn and Vice Principal Nicola Dillard delivered a comprehensive presentation updating the 2024-2025 Educational Services Monitoring and Operational Plan, and emphasized the alignment with the Mission Statement, which was co-created by SEAC:

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*Our mission is to support the creation of equitable, supportive and fully inclusive learning spaces where all students can achieve their goals, develop to their full potential, and experience success. Our purpose is to support staff to recognize the unique strengths and needs of every student and to enable the conditions for learning, engagement, belonging and achievement.*

Principal Blackburn and Vice Principal Dillard reviewed the four foundational principles from the Monitoring and Operational Plan:

- Culture Matters
- Supports Matter
- Programming Matters
- People Matter

Additionally, the Monitoring and Operational Plan lists eight specific key areas of focus for capacity building and support:

- Universal Design for Learning
- Executive Functions
- Assistive Technology
- Relationship Based Approaches
- Accessibility
- Neuroaffirming Practices
- Multi-tiered Systems of Support
- Modification/Accommodations

### Strategic Alignment with LDSB Goals

The Educational Services Department focused its efforts throughout the year on aligning its goals with the broader Limestone District School Board (LDSB) Strategic Plan.

#### Goal #1

| LDSB Strategic Plan Goal                                                                        | Educational Services Goal                                                                                    | Strategy                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Increase/ensure educator and staff ability to foster growth in student learning and achievement | Enhance the capacity of in-school teams and Educational Services staff to meet the needs of diverse learners | Implement focused and strategic professional learning plans for staff groups |

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#### Actions Taken

- Delivered professional learning for Educational Assistants (EAs) focused on:
  - Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)
  - Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
  - Accommodations and Modifications
- Provided targeted professional learning for classroom teachers to support programming for students with complex needs.

#### Goal #2

| LDSB Strategic Plan Goal                                                | Educational Services Goal                                                 | Strategy                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Create positive cultures that support student engagement and well-being | Promote culturally responsive, identity affirming and inclusive practices | Embed and refine processes and practices which support strengths-based and neuro-affirming approaches |

#### Actions Taken

- Expanded system-wide knowledge and understanding of neuro-affirming practices through targeted professional learning.

#### Goal #3

| LDSB Strategic Plan Goal                                               | Educational Services Goal                                       | Strategy                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Meaningfully and effectively collaborate with communities and families | Promote partnerships, value voice, and reduce systemic barriers | Intentionally and authentically involve families and community partners |

#### Actions Taken

- Created structures to access and respond to family and student voice.

#### Goal #4

| LDSB Strategic Plan Goal                                                               | Educational Services Goal                                                                        | Strategy                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Align Board resources to support improved student achievement, learning and well-being | Effectively implement school-based models of support that are flexible, responsive and inclusive | Equitably allocate resources within school-based multi-tiered systems of support |

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### Actions Taken

- Provided resources to schools to implement universal supports.
- Supported the implementation of school-based referral pathways to supports and services.

### Next Steps

- Ongoing Data Discovery
- Professional Learning Plan 2025-2026
- Ministry Grants
- Student and Family Voice
- In-School Team Support/Coaching
- Individual Education Plan (IEP) Transition

**6.2 Special Education Audit Overview** – Principal Michael Blackburn provided an overview of the Special Education Benchmarking Report – 2023-2024.

### Purpose

To evaluate LDSB's performance in Special Education through an internal audit conducted by the Ontario East Team.

### Key Strengths Identified

- **High Identification Rates:** LDSB consistently identifies exceptionalities such as learning disabilities, autism, and multiple exceptionalities, with a focus on year-over-year consistency.
- **IEP Coverage:** Achieved 100% IEP coverage for all identified special education students by 2022–2023, demonstrating a strong commitment to inclusion and tailored support.
- **SEA Fund Management:** Improved Special Equipment Amount (SEA) fund utilization, reducing over-allocation from 9.4% in 2021–2022 to 5% in 2022–2023.
- **Student Support Access:** Maintains a favorable student-to-counselor ratio (135.44:1 in 2022–2023), enhancing access to social services.
- **Resource Efficiency:** Demonstrates moderate per-teacher spending and efficient resource allocation compared to regional peers.
- **Inclusive Education:** Prioritizes inclusive education with most students integrated into general classrooms, with limited use of fully or partially self-contained classes.

### Challenges Identified

- **Funding Deficit:** LDSB operates with a persistent special education funding shortfall, increasing from 17.54% in 2021–2022 to 20.16% in 2022–2023. This deficit highlights funding challenges despite LDSB's prioritization of special education programs.
- **Rising Costs:** Per-student spending rose significantly from \$5,076 in 2021–2022 to \$9,028 in 2022–2023, indicating higher investment but also reflecting higher costs.

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- **Staffing Ratios:** High student-to-psychologist (727:1) and student-to-educational assistant (15:1) ratios indicate limited access compared to other boards.
- **Regional Comparison:** While LDSB aligns with the median for special education metrics, it often falls below the regional average in enrolment, staffing, and funding adequacy.

## 7. CORRESPONDENCE

None at this time.

## 8. ASSOCIATION UPDATES

None at this time.

## 9. OTHER BUSINESS

**9.1 Administrative Report: Superintendent's Report** – Superintendent Scot Gillam provided an overview of the Superintendent's Report, which was included in the Agenda Package.

## 10. NEXT MEETING DATE

September 10, 2025

## 11. ADJOURNMENT

*MOVED BY: Member-at- Large Erin Clow, that the meeting adjourn. Carried.*

*The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 pm.*