Limestone DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Our Intention: To make a positive difference in the lives of every student, in every classroom, in every school.

Agenda – SEAC Meeting

October 14, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.

Limestone Education Centre

220 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston, Ontario

Public Viewing: Join the Live Event

Public Meeting – 5:30 p.m.

Acknowledgement of Territory: "The Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek 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."

1. **WELCOME**

2. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

3. **DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
   - 4.1 SEAC Meeting – September 9, 2026 (Pages 3-6)

5. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**
   - 5.1 Accessibility Committee Meeting

6. **EDUCATIONAL SERVICES UPDATE**
   - 6.1 Special Education Plan: Professional Learning – Educational Services Staff
   - 6.2 Summer Mental Health and Special Education Funding and Support – Educational Services Staff

Limestone District School Board

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

See Yourself in Limestone

7. CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Lakehead Public Schools – Letter to the Minister of Education regarding Concerns Regarding Recent Legislation, Special Education Funding, and the Impact on Students with Special Education Needs, dated October 8, 2026. For your information (Pages 7-9).

8. ASSOCIATION UPDATES

8.1 Autism Ontario – Autism Ontario SEAC Nomination – Representative – Janice Pelechaty. (Page 10)

8.2 Easter Seals Ontario – Easter Seals Ontario Nomination – Representative – Sarina Walker (Page 11)

8.3 Autism Help Ontario brings together practical information about autism assessment and diagnosis, the Ontario Autism Program, funding, school supports, therapy resources, and family navigation.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Administrative Report: Superintendent's Report –Superintendent Blackburn (Pages 12-13)

9.2 Future Agenda Items

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

November 11, 2026

11. ADJOURNMENT

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

September 9, 2026

Public Meeting

Roll Call:

Trustees:	Members:
T. Lloyd Regrets: K. McGregor	Present: A. Martin, Member-at-Large (Queen's University) K. Hill, Member-at-Large E. Clow, Member-at-Large H. Clark, Autism Ontario Z. Rogers, Community Living Kingston J. Barker, Lennox & Addington Resources for Children Regrets: G. Eaton-Smith, Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston L. Clouthier, Easter Seals Ontario
Invitees:	Staff:
	Present: M. Blackburn, Superintendent of Education D. Thompson, Principal of Educational Service A. Todd, Vice-Principal of Educational Services W. Fisher, Educational Services and Safe Schools Lead C. Snider, Special Education Program Coordinator M. Aylsworth, Special Education Program Coordinator M. West, Special Education Program Coordinator J. Lalonde, Special Education Program Coordinator S. Labbett, Special Education Program Coordinator
Recorder:	Guests:
J. Senior, Administrative Assistant	None at this time.

1. WELCOME

Trustee Lloyd called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Trustee Lloyd read the Acknowledgement of Territory:

"The Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek 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."

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 Katrina Hill that the June 10, 2026, Minutes be approved. Carried.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

5.1 Special Education Plan 2026-2027 - Superintendent Michael Blackburn provided an update on the 2026-2027 Special Education Plan, noting that the plan has been finalized, posted on the Limestone District School Board website, and submitted to the Ministry of Education. Significant revisions were made to align with updated Ministry templates and requirements.

Members were advised that ongoing consultation on the Special Education Plan is a Ministry requirement. To support this process, a community feedback form has been added to the Board website, allowing community members to submit comments, questions, and recommendations. Feedback received will be reviewed and shared with SEAC as appropriate. In addition, regular consultation with SEAC throughout the school year will be incorporated to provide ongoing opportunities for input and feedback on the plan.

6. EDUCATION SERVICES UPDATE

6.1 Accessibility in Limestone Presentation – Educational Services Staff – The Educational Services Leadership Team provided an overview of accessibility initiatives outlined in the 2026-2027 Special Education Plan. Members learned about the Board's commitment to accessibility through compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), implementation of Board policies and procedures, and the ongoing work of the Accessibility Committee.

The team highlighted the collaborative work between Educational Services and Facility Services to identify and address accessibility barriers in schools. Through regular consultations and accessibility walk-throughs, the Board reviews and prioritizes projects to improve access for students, staff, and community members while working toward standards that exceed minimum building code requirements where possible.

An overview of Special Equipment Amount (SEA) funding was provided, including how specialized equipment and supports are identified and purchased to help students access learning, participate fully in school activities, and meet individual physical, communication, sensory, and personal care needs. Members also heard about efforts to provide both individualized supports and broader classroom resources that remove barriers to learning.

Current accessibility initiatives include accessibility improvements at Gould Lake, a power wheelchair pilot project, staff training on accessible communications, implementation of Microsoft accessibility tools, accessible field trip planning resources, and the use of centrally purchased accessibility equipment such as all-terrain wheelchairs, evacuation chairs, portable lifts, and change tables.

The presentation also highlighted Administrative Procedure 260 and the Accessible Field Trip Planning Guide, which support inclusive planning for field trips and events by focusing on removing barriers, addressing individual student needs, reducing financial barriers, and ensuring equitable alternatives when participation is not possible.

The presentation concluded with a student success story demonstrating the impact of a power wheelchair pilot project. Staff shared how access to the device increased a student's independence, mobility, choice-making, and participation within the school environment, illustrating the broader impact of accessibility initiatives on student belonging and inclusion.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Thames Valley District School Board- Letter to Minister of Education regarding Funding Support for Students Requiring Special Education Programs and Services, dated June 22, 2026. Provided for information in the Agenda Package.

7.2 Halton District School Board – Letter to Minister of Education regarding Increased and Sustainable Special Education Funding, dated September 1, 2026. Provided for information in the Agenda Package.

8. ASSOCIATION UPDATES

None at this time.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

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

9.2 Future Agenda Items- SEAC members were invited to suggest topics for future SEAC agendas at any time throughout the school year. It was noted that recommendations may include areas of interest, requests for additional information on previous presentations, or topics members would like explored in greater detail. Members were encouraged to bring forward ideas during meetings or by contacting Board staff between meetings. While suggestions may not appear on the next agenda, they will be considered for future meetings to support ongoing learning, discussion, and consultation.

9.3 Other Business Updates- Superintendent Blackburn provided several updates for members' information. Members were advised that Laura Conboy, LDSB Mental Health Lead, has been seconded to School Mental Health Ontario for the current school year as a provincial system leader supporting school boards across Ontario. Recruitment efforts are underway to fill the role during the secondment period.

An update was also provided on the Inclusive Playground Project. The new inclusive playground at Shannon Park is scheduled to officially open on September 12, 2026, marking the culmination of a multi-year fundraising and community partnership effort supported by Limestone District School Board.

An update was provided regarding trustee and SEAC elections. Trustee elections will take place in October, with the new Board to be sworn in in November. Following the appointment of trustees to SEAC, elections for the SEAC Chair and Vice-Chair positions will be held. Current officers will remain in their roles until the election process is complete. Members were also advised that associations may review and update their SEAC representatives during this period.

NEXT MEETING DATE

October 14, 2026

10. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Lakehead Public Schools

Lakehead District School Board
Jim McCuaig Education Centre
2135 Sills Street
Thunder Bay, Ontario P7E 5T2
Tel: (807) 625-5100 Fax: (807) 622-0961

October 8, 2026

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

Via email: minister.edu@ontario.ca

Subject: Concerns Regarding Recent Legislation, Special Education Funding, and the Impact on Students with Special Education Needs

Dear Minister Calandra:

On behalf of the Lakehead District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), we are writing to express our concern regarding Bill 33 and Bill 101, current funding structures and the impact on students with special education needs.

Bill 33 and Bill 101 together represent a significant shift toward increased centralization of decision-making within the Ministry of Education. These changes expand ministerial authority, reduce local discretion, and alter the role and influence of trustees. From a special education perspective, this shift raises serious concerns about accountability, responsiveness, and the ability of families to access timely and meaningful support.

For students with special education needs, governance structures are not abstract, they directly affect access to programs, services, and accommodations. Trustees play a critical role in ensuring public accountability and in providing families with an accessible, locally responsive avenue for advocacy when supports are not being delivered as required. Evidence from provincial advocacy highlights that many families rely on trustees to resolve barriers to access, particularly when supports are delayed.

SEACs are legislated advisory bodies that rely on meaningful access to local decision-makers in order to fulfill their role. Any reduction in local governance or shifts that limit transparency and responsiveness risk weakening the ability of SEACs to advocate effectively for students with special education needs.

In addition to governance concerns, Lakehead District School Board's SEAC is deeply concerned about the growing disconnect between student needs and current funding structures.

Across our schools, there is an increasingly complex and interconnected continuum of need between mental health challenges and special education needs. Many students require consistent, intensive support in order to access learning; however, they may not have a formal special education identification. These students often present with significant mental health needs, including anxiety, self-regulation challenges, and trauma-related impacts, which directly affect their ability to function safely and successfully within the classroom.

In practice, there is a significant overlap between these needs. While the funding frameworks treat mental health and special education as distinct areas, front-line support requirements do not align with these silos. Students with mental health needs frequently require the same type of in-class, consistent adult support that is traditionally funded through special education, most often through Educational Assistants.

As a result, school boards are increasingly required to rely on special education funding to meet the needs of students whose primary challenges may be mental health-related. This creates additional strain on already limited special education resources and contributes to broader challenges in meeting the needs of students with formally identified exceptionalities.

At present, mental health funding is largely directed toward professional services such as social workers and psychological supports. While these services are essential, they do not address the day-to-day, in-class support needs of students who require ongoing supervision, co-regulation, and assistance to access the learning environment safely.

In this province we need a dedicated staffing component within mental health funding, beyond professional service delivery models. It is important to recognize the blended and overlapping nature of student need, rather than maintaining rigid funding silos. We need resourcing that reflects the reality that students often require consistent, in-class human support in order to be successful.

Without this shift, boards will continue to rely on special education budgets to meet needs that extend beyond the scope of those allocations, further stretching already limited resources and impacting service levels for all students requiring support.

In light of the combined impacts of Bill 33 and Bill 101, we respectfully urge the Ministry to:

- Ensure that changes to governance structures preserve meaningful local accountability and responsiveness to families;
- Maintain clear and direct access for SEACs to decision-makers, regardless of governance model;
- Engage in broad and authentic consultation with SEACs, school boards, and communities prior to further implementation of these legislative changes;
- Ensure that funding models align with the actual complexity of student need, including the overlap between mental health and special education; and
- Develop a dedicated, sustainable staffing approach within mental health funding to support students whose needs extend beyond episodic professional services and require consistent in-school support.

A publicly funded education system must be structured in a way that allows all students to access meaningful learning, regardless of the nature of their needs. This requires not only adequate funding, but governance structures that remain transparent, accountable, and responsive to the students and families they serve.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter and would welcome ongoing dialogue on how best to support students with special education and mental health needs across Ontario.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Posthumus, Chair
Special Education Advisory Committee
Lakehead District School Board

cc: Lakehead District School Board Trustees
cc: Hon. Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS)
cc: Ontario Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Chairs

August 19, 2026

Michael Blackburn
Associate Superintendent of Curriculum & Program Services – ITS and Continuing Education
Limestone District School Board
blackburnm@limestone.on.ca

Dear Associate Superintendent Blackburn,

Re: Autism Ontario SEAC Nomination – **Representative**

I am pleased to nominate **Janice Pelechaty** as Autism Ontario's **Representative** on the Limestone District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) for the **2026 - 2030 term.**

They meet the following eligibility criteria outlined in O. Reg. 464/97 of the Ontario Education Act:

- at least 18 years old
- a Canadian citizen
- a resident of the school board or authority jurisdiction
- an elector or taxpayer for the school board
- not an employee of the Board

Contact information:

Janice Pelechaty
Autism Ontario **Representative** Nominee
120 Country Club Dr., Bath, ON K0H 1G0
613-540-1543
joejanpel@yahoo.ca

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information or if I may be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Kelly Taylor

Kelly Taylor
Volunteer Services Coordinator
1-800-472-7789 ext. 463
kelly.taylor@autismontario.com

cc: Jill Senior, Administrative Assistant, seniorj@limestone.on.ca
Scot Gilham, Superintendent of Curricular Program Services, gillams@limestone.on.ca
Janice Pelechaty, **Representative** Nominee, joejanpel@yahoo.ca
Livia Congi, People & Family Experience Supervisor, SEAC@autismontario.com

Helping Kids with Physical Disabilities Succeed

One Concorde Gate, Suite 700
Toronto, ON M3C 3N6
Tel: (416) 421.8377
Toll Free: 1.800.668.6252
www.easterseals.org

October 6, 2026

Michael Blackburn
Superintendent for Special Education
Limestone DSB Education Centre
Postal Bag 610
220 Portsmouth Avenue
Kingston, Ontario K7L 4X4

Sent via e-mail: smithe@limestone.on.ca

Dear Mr. Blackburn,

I am writing to nominate Sarina Walker to replace Linda Clouthier as the Easter Seals Ontario member representative to the Limestone District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), for the new SEAC term 2026-2030.

Sarina is an Easter Seals Ontario volunteer and Canadian citizen over the age of eighteen. She resides within the jurisdiction of the board and is a public-school elector. Sarina is not an employee of the board. She can be contacted by phone at613-540-0516 or by e-mail at: sarinawalker21@gmail.com

Easter Seals Ontario was incorporated September 25, 1930, under the Ontario Corporation Number 000033730. I am sorry that Linda is stepping down as she is a great advocate for students with physical disabilities.

If you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to your response in writing.

Sincerely,

Alison Morse

Alison Morse,
Special Education and SEAC
Easter Seals Ontario

cc: Erduana Smith, Administrative Assistant, Limestone District School Board
Christine (Sarina) Walker, 33-127 Bath Rd. Kingston K7M 4Y1
Linda Clouthier, 639 Barnsley Cres., Kingston, On K7M 8X4

Administrative Report: Superintendent's Report

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

10/14/2026

A. Ministry Updates:

The Ministry of Education recently provided guidance and direction related to secondary assessment and evaluation, requiring some changes to our practices and processes in Limestone. A Family Guide was shared at the end of September, outlining key information about these changes, including mark breakdowns, examination requirements, and participation and attendance expectations. Staff also received guidance and direction in this area to support the equitable and inclusive implementation of these changes in Limestone classrooms.

B. Educational Services Updates:

Special Education Teacher Guide: Following consultation, the Special Education Teacher Guide was reviewed and substantially revised during the 2025-2026 school year. The guide is intended to provide information and support to Special Education Teachers in Limestone District School Board in areas such as Roles and Responsibilities of the Special Education Teacher, The Referral Pathway, Knowing the Learner and Creating Supportive and Inclusive Classrooms and Schools, Accessibility, Supporting at Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3, Literacy Interventions in Limestone, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) information, Special Equipment Allocation (SEA) claims, Transition to and Beyond School, and Community Partners and Programs.

Responsive Education Programs: Again this year, the Ministry of Education has provided funding for time-limited initiatives and projects in the following areas: mental health strategy supports, special education additional qualifications (AQs), and removing barriers for students with disabilities.

Some previous Responsive Education Programs (REP) funding has moved to core education funding to provide ongoing budget stability, including Transition Navigators and transportation and stability funding for children and youth in care.

Short-Term Educational Assistant Update:

In September, Short-Term Educational Assistant (STEA) support continued to be provided to schools to address the need for transitional support for students with complex medical and safety needs who are new to a school or the Board. Thirty STEA positions were allocated to schools across the district. Administrators are then invited to apply for renewed or new positions at three intervals over the school year to address new and emerging needs.

EQAO Results/Achievement:

2025-2026 EQAO results were released to Boards and the public on Friday, September 25, 2026. LDSB continued to show improvement in many of the core academic areas, surpassing the provincial average in four out of six areas on the Grade 3 and Grade 6 assessments.

Of note is the progress students with special education needs made between the Grade 3 and Grade 6 assessment (cohort data) with improvement in all six areas, ranging from 6% to 24%.

Mental Health Symposiums:

During the week of October 5, 2026, secondary schools participated in the second Student Mental Health and Wellness Symposium. The focus of this year's symposium was on empowering student leaders to promote Tier 1 initiatives focused on well-being, substance use, and addiction prevention/harm reduction.

Each secondary school was invited to send 8-10 students who:

- Demonstrate interest in leadership and/or mental health promotion
- Are willing to bring back their learning and collaborate with staff and students to lead Tier 1 initiatives at school
- Show commitment to identity-affirming approaches and inclusive practices

Additionally, mental health student-led initiative funding of up to $1,000 is available to all secondary schools to support the creation of new or existing school-based, student led mental health programs and initiatives.

Prepared by: Michael Blackburn, Superintendent of Curriculum and Program Services – Special Education/Mental Health, ITS, and Continuing Education