

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

March 25, 2026

Public Meeting

Roll Call:

Trustees:	Members:
T. Lloyd K. McGregor, Regrets	<p>Present:</p> <p>A. Martin, Member-at-Large (Queen’s University) Z. Rogers, Community Living Kingston E. Clow, Member-at-Large H. Clark, Autism Ontario</p> <p>Regrets:</p> <p>J. Barker, Lennox & Addington Resources for Children G. Eaton-Smith, Learning Disabilities Association of Kingston L. Clouthier, Easter Seals Ontario K. Hill, Member-at-Large B. Sheahan, Epilepsy South Eastern Ontario</p>
Invitees:	Staff:
	<p>Present:</p> <p>S. Gillam, Superintendent of Education, Learning for All D. Thompson, 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 L. Conboy, Mental Health Lead N. Dillard, Vice-Principal of Educational Services J. Lalonde, Special Education Program Coordinator S. Labbett, Special Education Program Coordinator</p>
Recorder:	Guests:
J. Senior, Administrative Assistant	<p>C. Propper, Principal J.G. Simcoe Public School A. Smith, Intensive Support Teacher, J.G. Simcoe Public School K. Ridgerson, Intensive Support Teacher, J.G. Simcoe Public School</p>

Limestone District School Board

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1. WELCOME

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

Co-Chair Martin 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 Trustee Tiffany Lloyd that the February 11, 2026, Minutes be approved. Carried.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None at this time.

6. EDUCATION SERVICES UPDATE

6.1 Intensive Support Teacher Team Sharing – Principal Carrie Propper, Principal of J.G. Simcoe Public School, introduced Kristin Rodgerson and Abby Smith, the school’s Intensive Support Teachers (IST). Principal Propper spoke proudly of the school’s collaborative culture and noted that the addition of 2.0 IST staffing this year has been a significant and positive change. Principal Propper emphasized that collaboration is the school’s greatest strength and credited the IST teachers for their leadership, dedication, and the positive impact they have on students and staff.

Kristin Rodgerson and Abby Smith, Intensive Support Teachers (IST) at J.G. Simcoe Public School, provided an overview of the school context, the Intensive Support Teacher model, and its impact on student engagement, inclusion, and learning.

J.G. Simcoe Public School serves approximately 220 students, with 95 students on Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Kristin and Abby explained that the school community experiences significant socio-economic challenges, including food insecurity, housing instability, trauma, and mental health

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needs. The school provides extensive nutrition supports, including weekly lunches and daily snacks, and works closely with community agencies to support students and families.

IST Model and Team-Based Approach

The evolution of the IST model was outlined, emphasizing a flexible and responsive approach to student support. The model focuses on maximizing instructional time, reducing unnecessary transitions, and supporting students within classroom environments whenever possible.

Classroom teachers remain the primary advocates for students, supported by Student Support Teachers (SSTs), ISTs, the Student Support Counsellor (SSCs), and administration. Regular weekly meetings and daily communication support coordinated planning, responsive decision-making, and shared responsibility for transitions and family communication.

Key Responsibilities of Intensive Support Teachers (ISTs)

The role of the Intensive Support Teachers was outlined and includes flexible and responsive student support; instructional and resource support for staff; development and implementation of alternative learning goals and schedules; coordination with paraprofessionals and community agencies; management of Tier 1 resources and SEA equipment; data collection and progress monitoring; enrichment opportunities for students with complex needs; and support for regulation, de-escalation, and student and staff safety.

Learning Spaces

Multiple intensive support spaces were highlighted, including the Student Resource Room, Sensory Room, and Star Zone. These spaces are designed to be flexible and responsive and support regulation, learning, therapy, and enrichment. These spaces contribute to increased time spent in classrooms and reduced hallway presence.

Student Impact and Outcomes

Case examples were shared demonstrating how individualized supports are implemented for students with complex needs, supported by systematic data collection and progress monitoring to inform next steps and celebrate growth. Outcomes included increased classroom engagement, expanded inclusion opportunities, improved attendance for some students, and a 24% increase in Grade 1 reading benchmark achievement.

Communication and Accessibility

The presentation highlighted the use of core communication boards, assistive technology, and specialized equipment to support communication and accessibility. The importance of family engagement and coordination with external agencies was also emphasized as a way to reduce barriers and support continuity of care for students and families.

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The presentation concluded with an emphasis on the importance of collaboration, trust, and shared responsibility. It was noted that at J.G. Simcoe Public School, expectations are not lowered; supports are raised, ensuring that every student is provided with meaningful opportunities to succeed.

6.2 Student-Led Mental Health Initiatives – Mental Health Lead Laura Conboy presented an overview of student-led mental health initiatives supported through Ministry summer funding that was distributed to schools in September 2025. Schools were encouraged to use the funding in ways that best met student needs, with an emphasis on student voice and leadership.

Examples from several schools were shared, including:

- **Amherst Island Public School** – Students designed and continue to lead the use of a regulation and wellness space (“Reg Room”) to support emotional regulation, reflection, and peer support.
- **Granite Ridge Education Centre** – Student-led initiatives included immunization support kits developed in collaboration with Public Health and school-wide wellness events.
- **James R. Henderson Public School** – Students formed the Belong and Believe Club, launched inclusive recess clubs, created wellness resources, and hosted a student-planned “Respect in Action” conference for peers.
- **LCVI** – Existing Wellness Club programming was expanded to include mental health promotion events, gratitude activities, and exam-stress supports.
- **Winston Churchill Public School** – Grade 5/6 student leaders facilitate weekly Wellness Club sessions for younger students focused on social-emotional learning and mindfulness.
- **LaSalle Intermediate and Secondary Schools** – Students created and distributed holiday wellness kits for all intermediate and secondary students, including community support information.

It was noted that these initiatives were ongoing and sustainable, rather than one-time events, and reflected the Board’s Mental Health Strategy in action through authentic student engagement. Additional student work will be shared at a future SEAC meeting.

6.3 Educational Services Monitoring and Operational Plan 2025/26 Update – Principal Deborah Thompson provided an update on the Educational Services Operational and Monitoring Plan, grounded in the outcomes of the previous Special Education Review and aligned with the Limestone District School Board Strategic Plan. The presentation emphasized the guiding principles that culture, supports, programming, and people matter. The four core goals of the plan were reviewed, including enhancing the capacity of in-school and Educational Services teams to support diverse learners; promoting culturally responsive, identity-affirming, and inclusive practices; valuing voice and reducing systemic barriers; and implementing flexible, responsive, and inclusive school-based models of support.

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Feedback collected in December 2025 focused on successes and highlights, turning points and difference makers, and works in progress related to implementation of the plan. A total of 56 responses were received, representing multiple Educational Services roles. It was noted that collaboration, relationships, team meetings, and support for complex learners were frequently identified as key areas of success. Turning points and difference makers most often referenced multidisciplinary teams, collaboration, engagement with parents and community services, and student success.

Areas identified as works in progress included inclusion, communication, consistency across multidisciplinary teams, consent processes, belonging, and capacity. It was highlighted that multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) were consistently identified across all categories—as a success, a difference maker, and an area requiring continued development—prompting further examination of team functioning.

Further exploration focused on what contributes to effective MDTs. Elements identified as working well included diverse professional voices, willingness to collaborate, open communication, clear action planning, regular meetings, and the involvement of Special Education Coordinators. Strategies associated with well-functioning teams included set agendas, consistent meeting schedules, clear leadership roles, use of referral pathways, documented minutes and follow-up actions, and intentional planning. Challenges identified included time constraints, scheduling, variability in participation, communication, and obtaining consent for information sharing.

Possible next steps were outlined to support consistency and effectiveness of MDTs across schools, including clearer communication regarding team composition, key elements of effective teams, practical strategies for success, sample templates for agendas, minutes, and action plans, and troubleshooting supports. It was emphasized that effective in-school and multidisciplinary teams play a critical role in prioritizing students in decision-making, developing comprehensive support plans, monitoring progress, and refining practice in support of student success.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Durham District School Board – Letter to Minister of Education regarding Provincial Proposal to Replace Trustees with Provincially Appointed Supervisors, dated February 19, 2026. Provided for information in the Agenda Package.

7.2 Toronto District School Board – Letter to Minister of Education regarding Provincially Appointed Supervisor not attending SEAC Meetings, dated February 25, 2026. Provided for information in the Agenda Package.

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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

April 22, 2026

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY: Trustee Tiffany Lloyd that the meeting adjourn. Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

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