



ALGOMA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (S.E.A.C.)

MINUTES OF MEETING
January 13, 2026
Sugar Maple Room
12:00 Start Time

Present: P. Mick (Member-At-Large), M. Barbeau (Community Living Algoma), M. Tuomi (Autism Ontario), A. Gauthier (Thrive CDC), S. Kitts (North Shore Tribal Council) C. Snider (Algoma Family Services)

Trustees: H. Whitley, S. Evans

Staff: B. Vallee (Superintendent), Kristen Viita (System Administrator), K. Lappage (System Administrator)

Regrets: V. Simon (Member-at- Large),

Guests: Lori Lambert (Early Years Resource Facilitator)

Meeting called to order at 12:03. With Chair Mick attending virtually, Superintendent Vallee will facilitate the remainder of the hybrid meeting.

1. **Welcome** – Welcome to all SEAC members.

2. **Round Table** - Introduction of members, staff, and/or guests.

3. **Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

- Approval of Agenda. Moved by S. Kitts. Seconded by M. Barbeau. All in favour.
- Approval of Minutes (November 4 ,2025). Moved by H. Whitley. Seconded by M. Tuomi. All in favour.

4. **Correspondence:** No correspondence received this month.

5. **Presentation/Discussion: Transitions to School (L. Lambert)**

- Lori Lambert reviewed the *Transitions to School* process that is in place for students with special needs beginning Kindergarten in the fall. The *Transitions to School* process is designed to ensure a positive transition to school experience for children identified as having additional needs.

- This is a year-long process, with many “phases” that occur between October of the current school year to October/November of the following school year. Approximately 75 incoming kindergarten students are part of our formal process each year.
- During the fall months, community partners (e.g. service providers, daycare) provide the ADSB with referrals for students receiving services that may need additional support with the transition to school.
- Initial meetings take place in January/February with ADSB staff, community partners, and the parent/guardian/caregiver – often the child is in attendance as well - to share information and develop a profile of the child.
- Follow-up meetings occur in late April and May at the school the child will be attending. The school-based team, ADSB system staff, community partners, parents/guardians/caregivers discuss the original profile, note any updates since the initial meeting, and develop a school-based plan for the student’s transition. Often the child will attend as well, which is a great opportunity for them to visit the school and for school staff to meet them.
- Transition activities, which may include our summer transition program, occur during the spring and late summer. This may include visits to school or classroom, visual books to familiarize students with school-based personnel and a finalized student profile. L. Lambert shared samples of the sort of information that would be part of the profile. Several of our summer transition focus on incoming kindergarten students with high needs that benefit from programming to introduce some of the rules and routines that they will encounter in the fall.
- During late September and October, “follow-up” meetings take place for students that are part of the Transitions program. These meetings are intended to discuss the transition process, the student’s progress, and next steps for providing programming and services throughout the remainder of the school year.
- The process concludes in October/November with meetings between school board and community partners to review processes with the aim towards helping to improve and streamline the process for the upcoming year.

6. Member Organization Updates

North Shore Tribal Council (S. Kitts)

- The Garden River Education unit has hired an additional driver to help support transportation
- Process is underway to hire 3 additional ASWs
- Covering for absence of a staff member.

Thrive (Amanda Gauthier)

- Have added some new positions filled by students from Algoma University
- Several winter programs continue to run.

Community Living Algoma (Margaret Barbeau)

- Feb is Inclusive Education Month. Information about the *Together We're Better Contest* is now available
- Applications are now being taken for the *Summer Employment Program*. Students with a developmental disability or autism may apply for the program; also taking applications for Job Coaches (secondary or post-secondary) that will work with these students. Applications will be accepted until February 20th.

Algoma Family Services (C. Snider)

- AFS has added a few new staff positions including an Elder and an Indigenous Outreach Worker, Outreach Worker for unhoused youth focused on housing and system referrals and Outreach Work Education/Work experience.
- Virtual hub is moving along with a full-time counsellor and part-time counsellor.

Autism Ontario (Margaret Tuomi)

- Autism Ontario is taking applications for the March break reimbursement fund. Parents can apply and will be chosen by lottery due to need.
- AFS, Autism Ontario and Queen's University are beginning a special Photovoice project in March. Camera is used to document the lives, opportunities and so on of the participants in the project. More details to follow.

7. Report from the Board (Trustees)

- Following the Organizational Meeting in December, ADSB has a new Chair and Vice Chair. Elaine Johnston will be serving as the Chair with Greg Bowman acting as Vice Chair. Special Recognition to Jennifer Sarlo for 14 years as Chair of the Algoma DSB.

8. Report from Administration (K. Viita, K. Lappage)

- **Retirements:** Superintendent Blythe Servant (School Operations & Early Years) and Frank Palumbo (Human Resources) have retired. Welcome to Nic Turco as Acting Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. Superintendent Joe Maurice will be adding staffing to his portfolio and Superintendent Brent Vallee is adding Early Years. We have also put two System Administrators in place to help distribute workload for the remainder of the year – James Kerr and Joey Turco
- **Kindergarten Registration/Transitions:** Now that 2026 has arrived, Kindergarten registration has begun.! On-line registration is encouraged and currently available through the ADSB website. For those unable to register online, we encourage you to contact your local public school or reach out to 705-945-7235 for more information. Registration is on-going but we encourage families to register as soon as possible! Getting ready for the upcoming school year is a long process and early registration helps us be prepared for our incoming students. Families will receive a follow-up call from the school principal to welcome them to the school community. Students that are registered will receive information about Kindergarten Orientation activities that take place during the spring

months. January also marks the beginning of our formal Transitions process for students with special needs that begin Kindergarten in 2026

- **2026-2027 School Year Calendar Consultation:** Public Consultation process is underway for the 2026-2027 school year calendar. As part of the consultation process with the other three coterminous Boards, ADSB is looking for feedback on the first and last day of classes for students:
 - Option 1 – Students begin classes on Tuesday, September 8 (after Labour Day) and finish classes on Wednesday, June 30.
 - Option 2 – Students begin classes on Thursday, September 3 (before Labour Day) and finish classes on Monday, June 28.

Please use the [2026-2027 School Year Calendar Consultation Link](#) to provide electronic input by **Friday, January 23, 2026**.

- **Professional Development Day:** There is a Professional Development Day scheduled for January 30th. Public agendas for all PD Days are posted on the ADSB website (Professional Development under the “About Us” tab) two weeks in advance if any SEAC members that would like to review the work taking place on any PD Day.
- **OCASE Virtual Symposium:** OCASE has another virtual symposium for members planned for Thursday, January 22nd. The focus will be a presentation from the director of the Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN) who will talk about Inclusion and Employment Pathways.
- **Promotion of Special Education Team Member:** Congratulations to Colleen Esposti on her promotion to vice-principal at Isabel Fletcher Public School. Colleen has been part of the special education team for the past four years as a Special Education Special Assignment Teacher role. While we are going to miss her, we wish her all the best in her new position. The SEAT position has been posted and we are hopeful that it will be filled shortly.

9. Next Meeting: February 10th, 2026

10. Motion to adjourn: Moved by S. Kitts. Seconded by C. Snider.

Meeting adjourned at 1:01 p.m.