

SEAC Meeting
Wednesday, February 25, 2026
Via Teams and North Bay Boardroom

Present:

Jay MacJanet, Director
Tim Graves, Executive Superintendent
Alison Clarke, Principal of Special Education
Stephanie Norrie, Executive Assistant
Chair Candy St. Onge, Almaguin Highlands Community Living
Vice-Chair Leigh Armstrong, Community Living Parry Sound
Kimberly Gignac, Special Education Coordinator – North Region
Caroline Labrecque, Nipissing First Nation
Lisa Paradis, Special Education Coordinator – East & West Regions

Guests

Lorianne Haslehurst, School-based Literacy Facilitator
Amy Bartlett Gibson, School-based Literacy Facilitator
Michael Watson, Grades 7/8 Literacy and Numeracy Student Success Lead
Lisa Rogers, School-based Literacy Facilitator
Genive Di Bernardo, Literacy Intervention Teacher
Kim Jenkins, Special Education Coordinator (Temporary)
Jeanie Fuscaldo, Community Member

Regrets:

Chris Guillemette, Community Living North Bay
Laura Hansman, Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children (OPVIC)
Tammy Adjoudj, Nipissing Down Syndrome Society
Caroline Couillard, Nipissing Special Education

Land Acknowledgement presented by Kim Gignac

Called to Order at 1:03 pm

Agenda Approval

Motioned by Leigh Armstrong, seconded by Caroline Labrecque. *Carried.*

Approval of the Minutes of the November 26, 2025, meeting.

Motioned by Leigh Armstrong, seconded by Caroline Labrecque. *Carried.*

NEW BUSINESS

Literacy Intervention Presentation by Stephen Krause, Student Achievement and Well-Being Principal

Please see the attached document to review the presentation that Principal Krause delivered.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Budget Recommendations for 2026-2027 School Year

- Recommendation 1- The SEAC for the NNDSB supports maintaining to the best of our ability, staff and resource support aligned with the tiered model of support currently in place across all regions of the Board. Suggested
- Revised Wording: The SEAC for the NNDSB supports increasing staffing levels for employee groups that have specialized qualifications to directly support students with special education needs (including, EAs and DLRTs). The SEAC also supports, at least, maintaining central staffing support personnel as aligned with the tiered model of support.
 - Leigh Armstrong was in support of the stronger language.
- Recommendation 2- The SEAC for the NNDSB supports maintaining and growing a multi-disciplinary model to support internal collaboration and opportunities to collaborate with community agencies/partners.
- Suggested Revised Wording: The SEAC for the NNDSB supports additional funds be allocated to provide a consistent multi-disciplinary model and approach within schools, so that internal collaboration occurs formally within schools and so that external community agencies/partners have various opportunities to collaborate with school teams.
- Recommendation 3- The SEAC for the NNDSB supports having Differentiated Learning Resource Teachers in all schools in order to support school level needs.
 - Leigh Armstrong noted that she supported seeing that each school had a designated DLRT.
- Recommendation 4 – The SEAC for the NNDSB supports the best possible allocation of central staff to support early and timely intervention, testing, professional assessments and specialized services (speech and language, hearing, sight, behaviour, Applied Behaviour Analysis) with equitable access across the regions.
- Recommendation 5 - The SEAC for the NNDSB supports maintaining staffing levels for Education Assistants, through retention and recruitment strategies, across the Board to enable equitable and inclusionary practices.
- Suggested Revised Wording: The SEAC for the NNDSB supports increasing staffing levels, where possible, for Education Assistants, through retention and recruitment strategies across the Board to enable equitable and inclusionary practices.

- Recommendation 6 - The SEAC for the NNDSB supports the continued use of the model of Flexible Education Assistants in all regions to best reflect the changing and evolving needs of students.
 - SO Graves contributed that there are both advantages and challenges currently with hiring flex EAs.
 - Principal Clarke further explained that the availability of flex EAs is advantageous to supporting students within NNDSB and noted that, given current staffing shortages, sometimes it also remains difficult to retain employees within this role.
- Recommendation 7 - The SEAC for the NNDSB supports innovative and evidence-based professional development of all staff and recognizes the importance of professional development topics, such as but not limited to social-emotional learning, neurodiversity and transition planning.
- Recommendation 8 - The SEAC for the NNDSB supports the acquisition of additional resources for secondary student programming in recognition of student learning losses and learning gaps related to the COVID19 pandemic.
- Suggested Revised Wording: The SEAC for the NNDSB supports the acquisition of additional resources for secondary student programming in recognition of student learning losses and learning gaps.
 - Principal Clarke highlighted this recommendation to encourage discussion and ensure that it remains current and relevant.
 - Director MacJanet suggested keeping the recommendation but to remove the language surrounding covid.
 - Leigh Armstrong suggested that the recommendation should retain some language surrounding external factors.
 - MacJanet, stated that the data we have as a board will shape the recommendation regardless of where the gaps or losses originate from.
- Principal Clarke shared the current snapshot of the data that indicates information related to NNDSB Special Education Classrooms. The table of data included:
 - the number and description of classroom spaces within NNDSB,
 - the number of students currently enrolled and being considered for future classroom spaces

Kim Gignac elaborated on the two main pathways within NNDSB for students who are eligible for a special education classroom placement. The developmental and communication pathways are somewhat flexible to allow students to move through the most appropriate pathway from primary to secondary. She noted that there are many factors that can influence how a student moves through a pathway, for example age, skill development trajectory, family decisions, space availability in the next placement, ongoing IPRC review and identification status.

Kim Gignac also explained that NNDSB operates a flexible entry model, meaning that transitions can occur throughout the year rather than only at fixed points within the year. She provided an example and described NNDSB's Primary Communication Class (PCC) currently at or near capacity, holding a waitlist, and having several eligible students for consideration. Further, Kim Gignac noted that the number of students becoming eligible for NNDSB's Junior Communication Class (JCC) directly impacts whether PCC has placements to offer. She noted that it's important to closely monitor the capacity and eligibility for these programs, as students are registered they need to continue within the pathway as long as they remain students of NNDSB. Kim Jenkins noted the trend of an increase in the number of early primary students being eligible for our primary program classes. Kim Gignac explained that spaces can open up at a varying rate depending on many factors including how quickly children transition throughout the stages of the programs.

STANDING ITEMS

Community Partner Updates

Community Living Parry Sound- no update.

Correspondence Received

There was no correspondence received to review.

REPORTS

Director's Remarks

Director MacJanet has visited 24 of 33 schools in the region and aims to complete all visits by March Break. He continues conversations with administrators, seeking input on what is working and what still needs improvement. The Director notes that SEAC is well supported by schools, and he believes it to be a strength within the Board, though he notes that feedback identifies navigating and managing all the available supports is an area that could be focused on.

EQAO data shows that NNDSB students are close to provincial benchmarks and that the goal of moving students closer to the provincial standard is attainable. He is overall happy with where the school board scores within special education and looks forwards to the ongoing improvement.

Special Education Report

- Principal Clarke shared that the central Special Education Department hosted professional development (PD) sessions for EAs on January 30 at various regional sites across our district. Feedback received so far indicates that educational assistants found the sessions helpful and relevant to their roles, particularly the sessions addressing oppositional behaviour and complex student profiles. The next regional PD session will occur on April 17.
- Principal Clarke also noted that the central Special Education team has been preparing for a SEA and SIP review and monitoring process by the Ministry of Education (MOE) that is planned to occur in March. Compliance monitoring is occurring for all school boards for the Special Incidence Portion (SIP) and Specialized Equipment Allocation (SEA). This monitoring process involves the review of 18 district school boards a year, over a four-year period, for a total of all 72 school boards. As part of this, the ministry conducts two school site visits per board.

SIP and SEA compliance monitoring gives the ministry an opportunity to gain an up to date understanding of the complexity of student needs at a school board and at a sample of schools, how the school board plans for program/service supports, and allows the ministry to check compliance with ministry directives.

The monitoring exercise also provides a chance to address outstanding issues and identify any areas in which policy adjustments may be required. As such, this process is noted to be a good feedback loop between school boards and the Ministry of Education.

- Principal Clarke highlighted that the central Special Education Department is preparing for a system special education meeting on March 3, 2026 wherein administrators, resource teachers and special education classroom teachers will join a virtual session on including IEP and IPRC process and timelines, student transition plans within IEPs and SEA technology and high needs equipment. As well, participants will receive updates/information from speech and language and psychology leads.

SEAC Chair Report

Chair St. Onge shared that she has hired an essential new staff member at Almaguin Highlands Community Living and looks forward to introducing her to SEAC soon.

Next meeting: March 25, 2026

Motion to Adjourn at 2:37 pm

Motioned by Leigh Armstrong, seconded by Caroline Labrecque. *Carried.*

Official