



**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, January 20, 2025 – 1:00 pm
Catholic Education Centre and Microsoft Teams**

Members: Ashlee Anderson (Indigenous: Child and Family Services of Grand Erie), Dennis Blake (Trustee), Shannon Korber (Child and Family Services of Grand Erie), Kerri Lomax (Principal, Elementary), Judy McCaffrey (Lansdowne Children's Centre), Lauren Moulton (Woodview Mental Health and Autism Services)

Regrets: Melanie Caldwell (Contact Brant), Michelle Drake (Crossing All Bridges), Simon Jennions (Community Living Brant), Patti Mitchell (Parent, County of Brant), Marilyn Noi (Autism Ontario), Jennifer Rudyk (Principal, Elementary), Tammy West (Haldimand Norfolk REACH)

Resources: Sandra DeDominicis (Vice-Principal of Inclusive and Special Education), Phil Wilson (Superintendent of Education)

Guests: Laura Patenaude (Teacher – Madonna Della Libera), Amy Voortman (Educational Assistant)

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Lauren Moulton welcomed the committee.

2. Land Acknowledgement

Superintendent Wilson read the board's land acknowledgement.

3. Opening Prayer

Sandra DeDominicis shared an opening prayer.

4. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Shannon Korber

Seconded by: Dennis Blake

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the agenda of the January 20, 2026, meeting.

Carried

5. Approval of the Minutes

Moved by: Dennis Blake

Seconded by: Shannon Korber

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the minutes of the December 16, 2025, meeting.

Carried

6. Correspondence - Nil

7. Spectrum Abilities Program

Laura Patenaude and Amy Voortman provided a presentation outlining the Spectrum Abilities Program at Madonna Della Libera School. The language immersive classroom supports six, grade 4-6 students, with autism who are unable to access the regular curriculum through a fully alternative, communication-focused program. The classroom is designed as an inclusive, family-like environment with defined learning zones and access to both instructional and sensory spaces, recognizing that regulation and communication are essential to learning. Visual schedules, core and choice boards, and explicit communication instruction promote student independence and reduce behaviours by addressing needs through a language-first lens. The program emphasizes respectful language modelling, kindness, and recognition of all forms of communication, supported through close collaboration with SLP, ABA, and OT staff. Literacy instruction, including the use of Readtopia, has been effective, and the core goal is to build and amplify student voice.

8. Community Agency Updates

Lauren Moulton

Woodview Mental Health and Autism Services updated that they have received the community Autism Grant and will be offering programs including Pantastic Chef and Mix and Make. Flyers will be shared.

Shannon Korber

Child and Family Services of Grand Erie updated that they are officially in their new building located at 221 Henry Street, Brantford.

Judy McCaffrey

Lansdowne Children's Centre updated they are preparing the All About Me Kindergarten packages.

Kerri Lomax and Jennifer Rudyk

Elementary schools are preparing report cards for distribution on February 9, 2026. Grade 8 students are in the process of preparing for the transition to secondary school, including participation in open houses and course selection. Junior Kindergarten registration opened on January 5, 2026.

9. Vice-Principal of Inclusive and Special Education and Superintendent of Education

The Special Education Department updated they held a Mentoring Essentials training for Educational Assistants. The training supported participants in developing a shared understanding of mentoring as a relational, non-evaluative practice that promotes educator well-being, professional growth, and student success. The training emphasized the importance of trust, mutual respect, confidentiality, empathy, and active listening in building effective mentoring relationships and creating safe spaces for reflection and dialogue. Educational Assistants gained practical strategies to support purposeful mentoring conversations, including collaborative goal setting, flexible mentoring roles (Consultant, Collaborator, and Coach), and reflective practices such as scaling questions. Overall, the training reinforced mentoring as a reciprocal learning process best sustained within a collaborative school culture and a broader network of professional supports.

10. Closing Remarks/Adjournment

Lauren Moulton thanked everyone. The meeting adjourned at 2:13 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 17, 2026.