



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2019

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, held on Wednesday, **December 4, 2019**, at 6:30 pm in the Father Burns csc Boardroom at the Catholic Education Centre, 427 Rice Road, Welland.

Vice Chair, Karen Murphy, called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Opening Prayer

- Opening Prayers were led by Vice Chair, Karen Murphy

2. Roll Call

Members	Affiliations	Yes	Excused
Harvey, Dorothy	Niagara Children's Centre	✓	
Helmecki, Bill	Pathstone Mental Health	✓	
Howcroft, Andrew	Community Living Welland Pelham	✓	
Murphy, Karen	Autism Ontario Niagara Region	✓	
Nangle, Ted	Learning Disabilities Association – Niagara	✓	
Palombo, Pina	Down Syndrome Caring Parents (Niagara)	✓	
Racine, Anna	Community Member		✓
Smith, Lorraine	Mainstream	✓	
Smith, Rita	Community Living Port Colborne/Wainfleet	✓	
Burkholder, Rhianon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Trustee – Thorold/Merritton 		✓
Burtnik, Kathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Trustee – St. Catharines 	✓	
Willett, Adeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Senate Representative 		✓
Filice, Adele	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice Principal, Secondary 	✓	
Kerho, Chris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal Elementary 	✓	

The following staff members were in attendance:

John Crocco, Director of Education, **Pat Rocca**, Superintendent of Education, **Jim Di Gioia**, Coordinator – Special Education, **Danny Giancola**, Coordinator – Special Education, **David O'Rourke**, Coordinator – Special Education, **Vincent Mancuso**, Behaviour Resource Teacher and **Jennifer Lanese**, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant to Pat Rocca.

John Crocco, Director of Education extended his gratitude and appreciation to the SEAC members for their time, commitment and dedication serving on SEAC. He closed by wishing them a joyous and restful holiday season.

3. Approval of the Agenda

- Moved by Bill Helmeczi
- Seconded by Andrew Howcroft

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Agenda of the Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **December 4, 2019**.

CARRIED

4. Disclosure of Interest

- No Disclosures of Interest were declared with any items on the Agenda.

5. Approval of Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee of November 6, 2019.

- Moved by Lorraine Smith
- Seconded by Andrew Howcroft

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **November 6, 2019** as presented.

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATIONS

1. Letter from Community Outreach Coordinator

- Karen Murphy spoke briefly about a letter that Anna Racine had received from Debbie Ogilvie, Community Outreach Coordinator for Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB). Debbie was inviting SEAC members to the upcoming Community Planning and Partnership Annual Meeting. All SEAC Members received a copy of the letter (via email) as attendees needed to reply to Debbie by **December 6, 2019**.

C. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Ministry of Education / Ministry of Children and Social Services Recommendation of the Ontario Autism Advisory Panel

- The SEAC Members broke into their chosen sub-committee to discuss these topics.
- The NCDSB is inviting the public and community partners to discuss potential planning and partnership opportunities of programming and/or facility.
- Niagara Catholic will share planning information, opportunities for partnerships and the Board's Long Term Accommodation Plan at this meeting and in support of the Ministry of Education's

Community Planning and Partnerships Initiative.

- We are requesting that organizations bring relevant planning information regarding their needs and/or plans. These partnerships strengthen the relationship between school boards and the wider community and improve services and supports available to available to students.

2. Parent Outreach

- Sheila Bennett and Terri Pauco will be invited in the Spring to discuss the triad between the Home, the Church and the School. A date for their presentation has not been confirmed yet.
- Danny Di Lorenzo, School Principal from Denis Morris CHS has generously offered to host this presentation once a date is scheduled in the Spring.

3. SEAC Sub-Committee Formation

The following sub-committees were formed:

- 1) Policy Committee
- 2) Ministry/Panel Reports Committee
- 3) Communications Committee
- 4) Survey Committee

- Prior to the meeting, Pat Rocca had ensured that all present SEAC Members had signed-up for a sub-committee.
- Pat Rocca emphasized that since this is a “new” initiative, the group is still “working” through the process.
- Kathy Burtnik reminded the group of SEAC’s mandate and stressed the importance of reviewing Board policies.

4. Policy Review

- The following Policies and Administrative Guidelines are currently being reviewed as part of the cyclical Policy and Administrative Guidelines Review process.
- To be considered, all submissions must identify the specific policy and include your name, phone number, address and affiliation with Niagara Catholic.

- *Anonymous or pseudonymous submissions will not be considered*

- [Code of Conduct Policy \(302.6.2\)](#)
- [Establishment and Cyclical Review of Policies Policy \(100.5\)](#)
- [Purchasing Supply Chain Management Policy \(600.1\)](#)
- [Trustee Electronic Meetings \(Board and Committees\) Policy \(100.8\)](#)
- [Volunteering in Catholic Schools Policy \(800.9\)](#)

- *Please submit your feedback to jennifer.pellegrini@ncdsb.com by **January 15, 2020**.*

D. SEAC Report

- NIL Report

E. AGENCY REPORTS

1. Learning Disabilities Association – Niagara – Ted Nangle

- NIL Report

2. Niagara Children’s Centre – Dorothy Harvey

- NIL Report

3. Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Karen Murphy

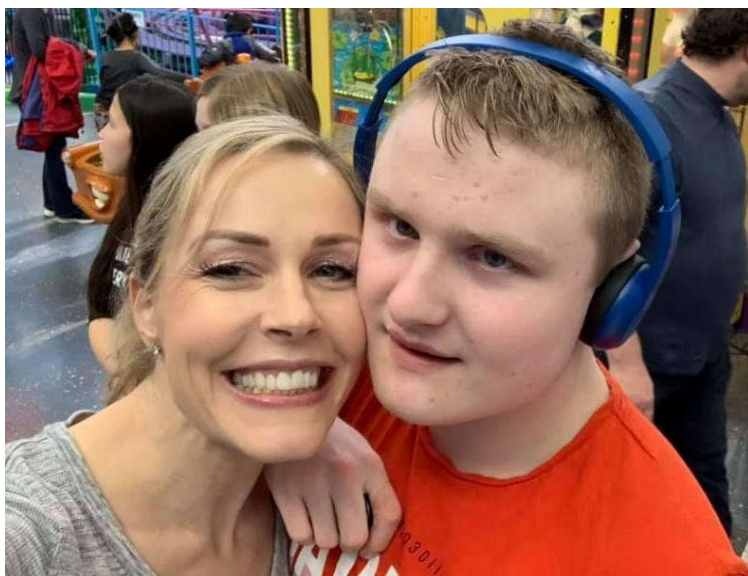
- NIL Report

4. Down Syndrome Caring Parents (Niagara)

- Pina Palombo discussed that there was a “big event” on **November 30, 2019**. The Down Syndrome Caring Parents (Niagara) group along with individuals with Down Syndrome went to a Toronto Maple Leaf Hockey game.
- The group also celebrated their Christmas party at Heartland Forest last month.

5. Community Living Welland Pelham – Andrew Howcroft

- Imagine getting your children ready for school in the morning. You make them breakfast, pack their lunch, and head out the door. You have every expectation that they will be happy and safe. But, what if your child has a disability and isn't able to tell you about their day at school? Schools should be places that parents can trust. It never crosses your mind that your child may be in danger - at risk of physical or emotional harm.
- Yet, for far too many children with an intellectual disability in classrooms across this country, physical or emotional harm are their reality.
- Seclusion rooms are harmful and abusive, and yet continue to be used by schools throughout Canada. In 2018, hundreds of Alberta parents reported that their children with disabilities were regularly secluded without their knowledge or consent.
- 80% reported their children were traumatized and distressed. 19% reported physical injury. 15% reported physical pain. A British Columbia report found "... too many BC students are still being injured and traumatized by abusive, inappropriate, and outdated practices." The story is the same in many provinces in Canada. Governments have failed to prevent the seclusion and restraint of children who cannot speak for themselves. Aidan's story is horrific, but it is not unique.
- Aidan has an intellectual disability, autism, and does not communicate with words. He was 12 years old when he was locked, naked, in a seclusion room.



- His father was contacted and advised to pick him up. He found him, 45 minutes later; alone, locked up, and whimpering. His father spent another 20 minutes looking for someone to unlock the door so he could comfort him and take him home.
- Aidan's parents have courageously taken the school district and Government of Alberta to court for the inhumane treatment of their son. They want to hold them accountable for their complete disregard for his emotional health and safety.
- This legal case will have enormous implications for children with intellectual disabilities throughout the country.
- If Aidan's case is unsuccessful, it will be disastrous for children with intellectual disabilities in Canada.
- Provincial governments and school boards should never be able to claim that the safety and well-being of children with disabilities is not their responsibility as they are attempting to do in Aidan's case.
- We must end the use of seclusion rooms and ensure that all children are welcomed and included, like Aidan is now in his new school.
- It is time to ensure that no child with a disability is ever again locked in a seclusion room and left there, alone and abandoned.

6. Mainstream – Lorraine Smith

- Mainstream has scheduled the date for our Pathways to Success for 2020. So please mark your calendar for **Thursday May 14, 2020** at the Holiday Inn & Suites Parkway Conference Centre in St. Catharines. Pathways to Success gives people with a developmental disability an opportunity to check out and connect with what their community has to offer, such as job support, recreation, financial support, mental health programs and much more!
- People with developmental disabilities, family and friends, support staff, teachers, educational assistants, students and workers in training should come.
- Please join them as an exhibitor if you have a product, service or organization that should be known to people with disabilities and their support networks.
- Mainstream in partnership with Community Living Port Colborne /Wainfleet, Welland Pelham Community Living and Autism Niagara are in the beginning stages of organizing a one-day conference for people we offer support to and to their families. Please save the date. The conference will take place on **May 23, 2020**.

7. Community Living Port Colborne / Wainfleet – Rita Smith

- NIL Report

8. Pathstone Mental Health – Bill Helmeczi

- NIL Report

F. STAFF REPORTS

1. Secondary Principals – Adele Filice

- NIL Report

2. Elementary Principals – Chris Kerho

- NIL Report

3. Special Education – Jim Di Gioia

- Educational Resource Teachers were introduced to the Canadian Test of Cognitive Skills (CCAT-7) assessment on **December 4, 2019**. The CCAT-7 will be used as a tool in the process for identifying intellectually gifted students by our school-based teams.
- The next Gifted Modules students identified as gifted is on **December 9, 2019** at Blessed Trinity Catholic Secondary School. The theme of the module is Leadership and Physical Education.
- Student Support staff and school-based Educational Resource Teachers are beginning to use a new online tool for initiating and tracking SEA Claim purchases. SEA-iT allows for the digital submission of files so that students can obtain specialized equipment more efficiently and staff can better manage tracking documentation and implementation of equipment that is purchased based on professional recommendations. Initial SEA-iT training for school-based staff occurred on **December 4, 2019**.
- Preschool Transition Information Parent Sessions have started for students entering Kindergarten Year 1 in September 2020. Special Education Coordinators are working in consultation with community partners to provide parents information and answer questions regarding the transition to school process.
- Kindergarten teachers have an opportunity to identify Kindergarten Year 1 students who present possible communication delays at any time throughout the school year for early identification screenings. Niagara Catholic's Speech-Language Pathologists are scheduling early identification communication screening for referred students. If communication needs are identified, the student may be referred for further follow-up to School Based Rehabilitation Services (SBRS) through the Niagara Children's Centre (NCC) for articulation, voice or fluency concerns, and/or targeted language services through NCDSB's Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs). This screening is available all year for any student in Kindergarten Year 1.

G. TRUSTEE REPORT

- The NCDSB held its Annual Organizational Meeting at the Catholic Education Centre on **December 3, 2019**.
- Frank Fera, Trustee for Niagara Falls since 2000, was re-elected as Chair of the Board by a straw vote. Dino Sicoli, who has represented Catholic ratepayers in Port Colborne, Fort Erie and Wainfleet since 2010, was re-elected (also on a straw vote) as Vice-Chair of the Board. He previously served as Vice-Chair in 2015.
- Remarks from by both the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Board can be viewed on the Board's website: www.niagaracatholic/trustees/.
- Kathy Burtnik also wanted to advise the group that in the New Year, there could be changes to the trustee representation following the January's meeting.
- Kathy Burtnik closed by wishing all the SEAC members a blessed holiday season and thanking them for their dedication, time and support.

H. STUDENT REPORT

- NIL Report

I. NCPIC Report

- NIL Report

J. FUTURE MEETINGS/ INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Election Proceedings – January 8, 2020.

- Karen Murphy motion if we could explore postponing the election until February's meeting as Anna Racine's schedule was preventing her to attend January's meeting.
- The group agreed to discuss this option next month.

K. NEXT MEETING

- Wednesday, January 8, 2020 at 6:30 pm at the CATHOLIC EDUCATION CENTRE

Pat Rocca thanked the group for their continued support and dedication. He closed by wishing the group a joyous and restful holiday season.

L. ADJORNMENT

- Moved by: Bill Helmeczi
- Seconded by: Lorraine Smith

THAT the December 4, 2019 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee be adjourned
CARRIED