



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2020

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, held on **Wednesday, February 5, 2020**, at 6:30 pm in the Father Kenneth Burns csc Boardroom at the Catholic Education Centre, 427 Rice Road, Welland.

Chair, Racine called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Opening Prayer

Chair, Racine welcomed Adeline Willett, Student Senate Representative and Frank Fera, Chair of the Board.

Superintendent, Rocca led a special prayer in memory of Tina DiFrancesco, Administrative Assistant who recently passed. We continue to keep Tina and her family in our thoughts and prayers.

2. Roll Call

Members	Affiliations	Yes	Excused
Harvey, Dorothy	Niagara Children's Centre	✓	
Helmeczi, 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		✓
Burtnik, Kathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Trustee – St. Catharines 		✓
Fera, Frank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of the Board 	✓	
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:

Pat Rocca, Superintendent of Education, **Danny Giancola**, Coordinator – Special Education, **Vincent Mancuso** – Behaviour Resource Teacher and **Jennifer Lanese**, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant to Pat Rocca.

3. Election of Chairperson

Andrew Howcroft nominated Anna Racine for Chairperson.
Second by Lorraine Smith

Superintendent, Rocca asked Anna Racine if she wished to stand for the position of Chairperson of the Special Education Advisory Committee. Anna Racine accepted the nomination.

Superintendent, Rocca asked if there were any more nominations.

There were no further nominations forthcoming.

Anna Racine was acclaimed as the Chairperson of the Special Education Advisory Committee.

Election of Vice-Chairperson

Andrew Howcroft nominated Karen Murphy for Vice-Chairperson.
Second by Dorothy Harvey

Superintendent Rocca asked Karen Murphy if she wished to stand for the position of Vice-Chairperson of the Special Education Advisory Committee. Karen Murphy accepted the nomination.

Superintendent, Rocca asked if there were any more nominations.

There were no further nominations forthcoming.

Karen Murphy was acclaimed as the Vice-Chairperson of the Special Education Advisory Committee.

4. Approval of the Agenda – January 8, 2020

- Moved by Karen Murphy
- Second by Andrew Howcroft

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Agenda of the Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **January 8, 2020**.

CARRIED

5. Approval of the Agenda – February 5, 2020

- Moved by Dorothy Harvey
- Second by Bill Helmeczi

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Agenda of the Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **February 5, 2020**.

CARRIED

6. Disclosure of Interest

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

7. Approval of Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee of December 4, 2019

- Moved by Dorothy
- Second by Karen

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

CARRIED

8. Approval of Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee of January 8, 2020

- Moved by Karen
- Second by Andrew

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **January 8, 2020** as presented.

CARRIED

B. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Parent Outreach

i) Dr. Sheila Bennett and Terri Pauco

- We have received confirmation that Dr. Sheila Bennett and Terri Pauco will be providing a presentation on **Wednesday, May 6, 2020** at Denis Morris Catholic Secondary School during Catholic Education Week. Danny DeLorenzo has graciously offered to host that meeting.
- Superintendent, Rocca would like to explore holding one SEAC meeting per School Year outside of the Catholic Education Centre.
- This meeting will be open to the public and our Niagara Catholic families are encouraged to attend.
- Chris Kerho suggested that schools notify families of this upcoming meeting, via School Messenger.

ii) Kelsey Dick – Special Guest

- Chair, Racine welcomed a special guest, Kelsey Dick to the meeting. She asked Kelsey to introduce herself to the group. Please see Kelsey's introduction that she shared with the group:
 - o *Hello, my name is Kelsey Dick and I am an Indigenous educator within the Soaring Eagles Secondary Program at Niagara Catholic's St. Kateri site. I am a citizen of the Métis Nation of Ontario and an active member of the Niagara Region Métis council. I am looking forward to the opportunity to be a part of this committee, so that I can be a strong advocate for the Indigenous students in our system.*

- *Prior to my journey with the NCDSB, I worked for the Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara as a literacy and social skills program supervisor for several years. I have always had a passion for supporting students with special education needs, and I look forward to both personal and professional growth as part of my role on this committee. Thank you, Maarsii, Wela'lin, Miigwetch, Nia:wen*

- We are looking forward to having Kelsey attend future SEAC meetings!

2. 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 the individual's name, their phone number, their home address and affiliation with Niagara Catholic.

- *Anonymous or pseudonymous submissions will not be considered.*

- [Concussion Policy \(303.1\)](#)
- [Employee Workplace Harassment Policy \(201.7\)](#)
- [Employee Workplace Violence Policy \(201.11\)](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Policy \(201.6\)](#)
- [Naming of a Board Facility, Designated Area or Chapel Policy \(100.15\)](#)
- [Sexual Misconduct Policy \(201.13\)](#)
- [Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals Policy \(NEW\)](#)

- Please submit your feedback to jennifer.pellegrini@ncdsb.com by 4:00 pm **February 6, 2020**.

- [Attendance Area Policy \(301.3\)](#)
- [Criminal Background Check Policy \(302.67\)](#)
- [Use of Corporate Logo Policy \(100.14\)](#)
- [Video Security Surveillance Policy \(701.3\)](#)

- Please submit your feedback to jennifer.pellegrini@ncdsb.com by 4:00 pm **March 11, 2020**.

3. SEAC Sub Committees

- The sub committees reconvened individually in groups after the meeting.

4. Hiring of New Director of Education

- Karen Murphy and Andrew Howcroft attended the meeting to discuss the hiring process of a new Director of Education for NCDSB.
- Kevin Kobus, Associate Partner of Promeus is the consultation firm retained by Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) to assist the Board of Trustees in their search for the next Catholic Director of Education.
- The next Director of Education will assume the role on **Tuesday, September 1, 2020**.

- As part of the initial stages of the search process, the partners of Promeus will hold consultation meetings with key stakeholders and representative groups from across the system in order to develop a Profile of the Ideal Candidate for the next Director of Education.
- Specifically, Promeus will be seeking input and feedback regarding:
 - o the key strengths and opportunities of NCDSB.
 - o The top three or four key challenges and/or priorities for the NCDSB to be addressed by the next Director of Education
 - o The ideal candidate criteria for the new leader, (i.e., experience, skills and personal qualities).

C. AGENCY REPORTS

1. Learning Disabilities Association – Niagara – Ted Nangle

NIL Report

2. Niagara Children’s Centre – Dorothy Harvey

- Niagara Falls Comic Con is offering the opportunity to attend the area’s largest pop culture celebration at a discounted price, and at the same time raise funds for Niagara Children’s Centre.
- For every admission ticket sold, using the promo code, “niagaracc20” Niagara Falls Comic Con will donate \$5.00 back to Niagara Children’s Centre! Even better, ticket buyers will receive 20% off the original ticket price! The event runs from **June 5 – 7, 2020** at the Scotiabank Convention Centre. Tickets can be purchased at www.nfcomiccon.com.
- Niagara Children’s Centre is pleased to announce that an accreditation survey conducted by CARF International in December resulted in a three-year Accreditation Award. This is the highest award possible.
- In particular, CARF notes that Niagara Children’s Centre appears to flourish in its committed service to clients and provides high quality, comprehensive care in an environment that fosters respect and compassion.
- Registration is now open for the Plasma Car Race that is taking place on **Thursday, May 28, 2020** from 4:00 – 7:00 pm located at 16 Melbourne Avenue in St. Catharines. For more information, please visit, <https://www.facebook.com/BalldhockeycomAthleticCentre/>.



3. Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Karen Murphy

- Our *Raise the Flag* Campaign is getting started for 2020. You can sign up for this event by clicking on their link: <https://raisetheflagforautism.com>.
- Hoodies and t-shirts are for sale and all proceeds will go to the Niagara Chapter.
- Autism Ontario Niagara’s annual Trivia Challenge is on **Saturday, February 29, 2020**.
- Summer Camp registration will be opening on **Monday, March 2, 2020**.

4. Down Syndrome Caring Parents (Niagara) – Pina Palombo

- Down Syndrome Niagara's (DSN) annual general meeting took place on **Sunday, January 26, 2020** at Club Italia and the current Board members remain the same. There were no newly elected members appointed to the Board.
- The annual DSN's Trivia Night will take place on **Saturday, March 21, 2020** at Club Italia. If anyone is interested in attending this event, you can email Rob Lavorato for tickets or purchase a table. This event has sold out three years in a row and it is sure to "Rock Your Socks". You can email Rob directly at rob.lavorato68@gmail.com.
- **Saturday, March 21, 2020** is Down Syndrome Awareness Day and the national logo for that day/event is *Rock Your Socks* and the DSN will be promoting this day at the Trivia Night and throughout the Niagara Region to promote awareness and inclusion for all individuals with Down Syndrome.
- DSN will be dropping off Down Syndrome Awareness' school packages to participating schools within our Board. This was well received well with a number of elementary schools and secondary schools taking part with setting up posters and fun facts on bulletin boards and displayed on tables within the school. This year we would like to promote this day Board-wide and will be sending out additional communication to both the NCDSB's SEAC and the DSN's SEAC.
- New this year, DSN will be hosting a *Disney On Ice* event in Hamilton. A special rate has been offered to our DSN group at this time. The date for this exciting event will take place over the March Break. The date(s) and time(s) will be announced soon.
- G-MC Homies with Chromies Foundation CrossFit workouts have resumed for 2020 calendar year and our DSN homies were back on **Sunday, February 9, 2020**. The next workout will be on **Sunday, February 9, 2020** and workouts will be offered every two weeks at the CrossFit in St. Catharines on Niagara Street.
- DSN group will be registering a team again for Niagara Children Centre's annual Plasma Car Race. This is the third year in a row that DSN has registered a team for this event. This year event is scheduled for **Thursday, May 28, 2020** at the Ball Hockey Athletic Centre located at 16 Melbourne Avenue in St. Catharines.
- Our next Board meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, March 1, 2020**.

5. Community Living Welland Pelham – Andrew Howcroft

- Andrew Howcroft spoke to the group about the *Open Future Learning Modules* that are available. Open Future Learning is the resource that will change the way you think about your work and the way that you support people.
- They are an online learning provider 100% dedicated to the learning disability workforce.
- Here are a list of the available options:
 - o *Staff Learning Modules* – designed to benefit anyone who touches the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.
 - o *Side by Side Learning Modules* – was created so that people who receive support and the people who provide support can learn together.
 - o *Mini Learning Modules* – captures everything you expect from Open Future (Staff Learning Modules) and delivers it in a bit size form, generally 30 minutes or less to complete.
 - o *Audio Learning Modules* – similar to an interactive podcast, the Audio Learning Modules make it possible to learning while you are on the go.

- There are also *videos on demands* – **838** individual videos in total. Individuals can select videos by subject, presenter, most popular and newest.
- If you are interested in learning more about the *Open Future Learning*, please visit their website: <https://www.openfuturelearning.org/learningmodules.html>.

6. Mainstream – Lorraine Smith

- The Mainstream and Gateway Strategic Alliance Initiative (Strategic Alliance Initiative) has been a two-year exploration to determine whether the two agencies should share some resources to maximize their individual and collective input. During Phase One, we wanted to determine the extent to which our organizations' cultures, leadership, and business functions could align. The answer to this question helped us assess the 'fit' between the two agencies and the amount of work required to integrate some aspects of business. At the end of Phase One it was realized, Mainstream's and Gateway's organizational cultures are extremely well aligned. In addition, people receiving supports, along with both executive directors, employees, funders, and community partners expressed solid support for the initiative – among the first cross-sector strategic alliance in Ontario.
- Based on Phase One results, both Mainstream's and Gateway's boards determined that it is in the best interest of both agencies to move forward with Phase Two: 'Future Scenario Planning.' Phase Two took a more in-depth look at how we could integrate specific aspects of business with the goal of improved effectiveness and efficiencies. The ultimate goal is to advance and sustain supports and services for people with developmental differences, mental illness, or a dual diagnosis in the Niagara region.
- As of **Monday, June 1, 2020**, Kevin Beswick, executive director of Mainstream will be retiring and John Osczytko, executive director of Gateway will be Mainstream's new executive director.
- Please mark **Monday, June 1, 2020** on your calendar for our upcoming annual fundraising golf tournament.
- Please mark your calendar for **Thursday, May 14, 2020** for our upcoming Pathways to Success. Pathways to Success gives people with a developmental disability an opportunity to check out and connect with what their community has to offer.
- Mainstream in partnership with Community Living Port Colborne /Wainfleet and the NCDSB are working on the development of a one-page transitional checklist for families who have children in elementary school. We are hoping the checklist will be a quick reference to help families plan for the transitioning of their child from elementary school to high school.

7. Community Living Port Colborne / Wainfleet – Rita Smith

NIL Report

8. Pathstone Mental Health – Bill Helmeczi

NIL Report

D. STAFF REPORTS

1. Secondary Principals – Adele Filice

- We are so very proud of the many accomplishments that our Special Education students in our Niagara Catholic Secondary Schools have achieved. Here are a few highlights that our Secondary Schools have shared.

i) *Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School*

- The Holy Cross Catholic SS' Special Education Class students continue to be actively involved in all aspects of Raider life. A highlight for three of our students was the opportunity to take the stage at the Performing Arts Centre on the evening on **Monday, December 9, 2019** with the Holy Cross Catholic SS Junior Band. Congratulations to Axel, Nathalie, and Hailey for their outstanding work on percussion, performing in four Christmas selections.

ii) *Lakeshore Catholic High School*

- Lauren Patterson who has a developmental disability is now in her second year of full participation with the school's rowing team.
- Mendel Hookstra from the Momentum Choir visits the Special Education Class twice a month to engage our group in music therapy.
- Cameron Henderson who has cerebral palsy and a wheelchair user received a potentially life-changing surgery in **December 2019** in order to straighten his legs. After 6 weeks of healing, he is now engaging in intensive physiotherapy. He began weight bearing this past week on his way. His goal is to walk the stage during Lakeshore Catholic's 2020 Graduation ceremony. We are looking forward to receiving future successes from Cameron in the months ahead.
- Zach Veldman who has autism accepted school admissions to Niagara College for School Year 2020 2021.



2. Elementary Principals – Chris Kerho

- St Andrew CES is participating in the Kids Helping Kids campaign, along with all of our Niagara Catholic schools. St. Andrew School has many activities planned for the duration of the fundraiser. All students were ask to donate \$2.00 per student or \$5.00 per family for the campaign. This small donation will allow St Andrew's students to participate in all the planned activities.

3. Special Education – Danny Giancola

Preschool-to-Kindergarten Transitions

- Special Education Coordinators have collected information from preschool resource consultants for students transitioning to Kindergarten in the Fall 2020 identified with special learning needs. Coordinators will contact Principals and Educational Resource Teachers to share the Preschool Transition Report Functional Checklist for these students (once registered) to assist in planning for the coming school year and coordinate transition meetings if necessary.

4. Pat Rocca, Superintendent of Education

i) Co-Instructing of the Special Education AQ for Administrators

- An invitation came from Catholic Principal Council of Ontario (CPCO) to have our very own Niagara Catholic Special Education AQ course focusing on Autism specifically. We have been given the permission to do so under the condition that we have instructors. Adele Filice and Superintendent, Rocca will be taking the instructors course and instructing this course to our current Vice Principals as part of our Administrators Mentorship Program. This will be consistent with our plan to build capacity with staff in order to work collaboratively together. The goal of this program is to impart effective and evidence based strategies to support students with ABA strategies.

ii) February 12 Pathways Summit

- The NCDSB and the Niagara Workforce Planning Board present the third annual Pathways Speaker Summit for students in Grades 6-12 and their parents or guardians.
- This is your opportunity to hear directly from local business and education leaders about emerging industries, markets and job opportunities for you or your child. This event features speakers from the Niagara Health System, General Motors, the Niagara Homebuilders Association, the Niagara Workforce Planning Board and many more. Get the facts straight from the source and be informed about the truths and myths of career and education opportunities in Niagara and beyond.
- The Summit takes place on **Wednesday, February 12, 2020** at John Michael Banquet Hall and Conference Centre in Thorold. The program will run from 6:00 - 7:30 pm. The doors will open at 5:30 pm.

iii) Giving From The Heart Out Of Love Fundraiser

- This year will mark the 22nd year that all schools in the NCDSB will participate in the *Giving From The Heart Out Of Love - Kids Helping Kids* fundraiser. While we will continue to support the Niagara Children's Centre, we are expanding our fundraising efforts to support the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education. This year's fundraiser will be held from **February 10 to February 28, 2020**. Regarding the extended timeframe, please note that activities do not have to be held daily. Principals may choose days that are suitable to their school.

iv) Growth and Retention Committee

- The mandate of the Board's Growth and Retention Ad Hoc Committee are:
 - o To review the enrolment realities and projections across the Board with a report to be brought back to the Board no later than **September 2020**.
 - o To make recommendations to the Board with respect to future growth and retention global strategies and priorities, Kindergarten to Graduation
- The first meeting will be rescheduled on **Thursday, February 13, 2020** at 6.00 pm at the Catholic Education Centre.

v) Michael Jacques

- Michael was featured in the Globe and Mail on **Saturday February 1, 2020**.
- Michael will be presenting to our Educational Assistants group on the **Friday, February 14, 2020** (PA Day) about his journey as a student of NCDSB.

- The full article can be viewed at <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/article-michael-jacques-cant-read-or-write-but-he-published-a-new-book/>.
- Most recently the Kinsmen Club of Fonthill awarded Michael, the *Pelham Citizen of the Year 2019*. There will be a dinner ceremony on **Tuesday, March 3, 2020** in Fonthill. Michael is the youngest person ever to receive this award. Michael continues to amaze us all.

E. TRUSTEE REPORT

- Chair of the Board, Fera and Board Trustee of St. Catharines, Burtnik are the newly appointed SEAC committee members. We are looking forward to hearing their input!
 - o Chair of the Board, Fera told the group that he and Vice-Chair of the Board, Sicoli are planning to visit all schools individually to meet with the respective Principals and Vice Principals.
 - o They are encouraging Principals and Vice Principals to speak openly about concerns/issues that need addressing and/or corrected in their school.

F. STUDENT REPORT – Adeline Willett

- Student Senate, Adeline Willette reached out to the Student Council's presidents of the other Niagara Catholic Secondary Schools if there were any upcoming events involving Special Education students. Here is what the other Secondary Schools reported to her:
 - o Saint Paul Catholic High School is hosting a Special Olympics.
 - o Notre Dame College is hosting a Raptor's Rally.
 - o Saint Michael Catholic High School is having a "Blue-Shirt" day in support of Autism.

G. NCPIC REPORT

- Chair, Racine reminded the group that we are still looking for a SEAC representative to attend Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (NCPIC) meetings.
- The next NCPIC meetings will take place on **Thursday, March 5, 2020** and **Thursday, May 7, 2020** at 6:30 pm.
- Chair, Racine explained to the group that the NCPIC meetings always take place on the first Thursday of the following months: September, November, January, March and May.
- Chair, Racine reminded the group that it was possible to have more than one committee member represent SEAC at the NCPIC meetings. She explained that the committee members could share this role by selecting the meetings that best suited their schedule.
- Chair, Racine encouraged the group to email Jennifer Lanese availability by **Friday, February 28, 2020**, if interested.
- An email message was later sent out to the committee members in order to update those members not in attendance that evening.

H. NEXT MEETING

- **Wednesday, March 4, 2020 at 6:30 pm at the CATHOLIC EDUCATION CENTRE**

I. ADJORNMENT

- Moved by Bill Helmeczi
- Second by Andrew Howcroft

THAT the February 5, 2020 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committed be adjourned
CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

J. SEAC SUB-COMMITTEES

- The sub-committees meet with their respective groups.