



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2020

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee held on **Wednesday, September 9, 2020**, at 6:30 pm Electronic Meeting in Compliance with Education Act Section 207 and Ontario Regulation 463/97 Section 5.1 (2) Public Access 1-647-749-124 (Tolls), Conference ID # 745 739 256#

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

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Opening Prayers

Chair Racine provided special Intentions to Karen Murphy and her family as they mourn the passing of her father. She also extended a special prayer to the St Catharines Cathedral as they recently were victim to a robbery. She sent prayers to all Catholic families and then led an opening prayer.

2. Roll Call

Members	Affiliations	Yes	Excused
Dick Huxley, Kelsey	Indigenous Community Member	✓	
Harvey, Dorothy	Niagara Children's Centre		✓
Helmeczi, Bill	Pathstone Mental Health		✓
Jacques, Michael	Community Living Welland Pelham	✓	
Murphy, Karen	Autism Ontario Niagara Region Chapter		✓
Palombo, Pina	Down Syndrome Niagara	✓	
Racine, Anna	Community Member	✓	
Smith, Lorraine	Mainstream		✓
Smith, Rita	Community Living Port Colborne/Wainfleet	✓	
Zoelman, Madeline	Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region	✓	
Burtnik, Kathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Trustee of St. Catharines 	✓	
Burkholder, Rhianon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Trustee of Thorold/Merritton 	✓	
Butera, Serena	<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:

Gino Pizzoferrato, Superintendent of Education, **Danny Giancola**, Coordinator of Special Education, **Vincent Mancuso** – Behaviour Resource Teacher and **Jennifer Lanese**, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant to Superintendent Pizzoferrato. Superintendent Rocca and Director of Education Cipriano were special guests that evening.

Since there were some new members, Chair Racine had all Committee Members introduce themselves and provide a brief description of the Agency that they represented.

3. Approval of the Agenda

- Moved by Michael Jacques
- Seconded by Rita Smith

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approves the Agenda of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **September 9, 2020**.

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 June 3, 2020

- Moved by Rita Smith
- Seconded by Pina Palombo

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approves the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **June 3, 2020**, as presented.

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATIONS

- There were no presentations at this time.

C. AGENDA ITEMS

1. SEAC Meeting Procedures – Board By-Laws, Policy No. 100.1

- Superintendent Pizzoferrato wanted to remind the Committee Members the procedures and guidelines of a SEAC meeting. He wanted to also share this with our new Committee Members.
- Since this was a Microsoft Teams Meeting, the meeting will be recorded as an official record of the meeting.
- Jennifer Lanese will be circulating the Board By-Laws, Policy No 100.1 to the Committee Members later this month.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato asked the Committee Members to review the guidelines as we will have a question and answer period next month.

2. Other Related Items

2.1 A review of the Goals and Visions for School Year 2020-2021

- The Committee Members are required to look at the previous goals and visions from School Year 2019-2020.
- If goals were not achieved last School Year, then the Committee Members need to decide whether to re-visit these goals again for this School Year.
- We were organizing a joint presentation with keynote speakers Dr. Sheila Bennett from Brock University and Terri Pauco from the Diocese. Dr. Bennett's presentation would discuss her work with Special Education. Terri Pauco would be discussing families that have children with special needs and not feeling welcome at church. Initially, this presentation was scheduled to take place last May at Denis Morris Catholic High School. The Committee Members were hoping to schedule this Parent Out-Reach during this School Year. We will have to possibly consider hosting it virtually due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Once finalized, an invite to the public would be circulated.
- Re-visiting breaking off into 1 of the following Sub-Committees after the scheduled SEAC Meetings.
 - 1) Policy Committee – reviewed through a SEAC lens
 - 2) Survey Committee – preparing surveys for parents
 - 3) Communication Committee – updating the SEAC Brochure
 - 4) Ministry Reports Committee – looking at the Ministry's guidelines
- One of the on-going goals, is to update the SEAC Brochure for School Councils' Newsletters and also provide a report to each school principal to share at School Council Meetings.
- The goals and visions were opened up for discussion by the Committee Members.

2.2 Welcome Superintendent Pizzoferrato and Director Cipriano

- Superintendent Rocca thanked the group for their time and dedication to SEAC. Superintendent Rocca will no longer serve on SEAC as he has taken over a new portfolio for School Year 2020-2021 due to the recent retirement of Superintendent Iannantuono. Superintendent Rocca welcomed Superintendent Pizzoferrato and Director Cipriano to Niagara Catholic and to the SEAC Meeting. Both Superintendent Pizzoferrato and Director Cipriano recently joined Niagara Catholic as of **September 1, 2020**.
- Director Cipriano thanked the group for inviting him to attend the SEAC Meeting. He thanked the Committee Members for their warm welcome to Niagara Catholic. He gave a summary of his background and promised to be supportive of SEAC's goals and initiatives. He hopes to attend as many meetings as possible.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato thanked the group for their warm welcome. He gave a summary of his background to the group and is looking forward to working with SEAC.

2.3 Annual Review of the Special Education Plan

- The 2020 Special Education Plan can be accessed from the Board's website. Select <Programs>, Select <Special Education>, Select <Special Education Plan> or by clicking on the direct link:
<https://cdn.niagaracatholic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Special-Education-Plan-2020-WHITEBG.pdf>

3. 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

- [Equity and Inclusive Education Policy \(100.10\)](#)
- [Retirement & Service Recognition Celebration Policy \(201.2\)](#)
- [Leadership Pathways Policy \(203.4\)](#)
- [Volunteer Recognition Policy \(800.4\)](#)

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

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Anonymous or pseudonymous submissions will not be considered

- [Dress Code – Secondary Uniform Policy \(302.6.6\)](#)
- [Elementary Standardized Dress Code Policy \(302.6.10\)](#)
- [Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Policy \(800.7\)](#)
- [Accessibility Customer Service Policy \(800.8.1\)](#)
- [Complaint Resolution Policy \(800.3\)](#)

- Please submit your feedback to jennifer.pellegrini@ncdsb.com by 4:00 pm on **October 10, 2020**.

D. AGENCY REPORTS

1. Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – Madeline Zoelman

LDANR has updated many of the programs.

- Math programming is currently fully enrolled (20 students).
- The Reading program has 60 participants with a total of 80 available spots.
- 2 spots in their BEST (social skills) program have been filled.
- New transition programming launching end of October for students transitioning to secondary and post-secondary school. 10 spots in each program: 6 filled in secondary and 1 filled in post-secondary. This is a new demographic for LDANR.

- All programming being offered online for this program session and likely next semester as well (no permits available for NCDSB or DSBN and likely none at Brock University either).
- Currently advertising back to school workshop for parents. Executive Director Sam is dispersing information on social media and via email.
- Planning to hold an information night in October for parents with testimonials and demonstration of their online learning.

2. Niagara Children's Centre – Dorothy Harvey

- NIL Report

3. Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Karen Murphy

- NIL Report

4. Down Syndrome Niagara – Pina Palombo

- NIL Report

5. Community Living Welland Pelham – Michael Jacques

- NIL Report

6. Mainstream – Lorraine Smith

- NIL Report

7. Community Living Port Colborne / Wainfleet – Rita Smith

- NIL Report

8. Pathstone Mental Health – Bill Helmeczi

- NIL Report

9. Indigenous Community Member – Kelsey Dick Huxley

- Celebration of Nations will take place from **September 11 to September 13**. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, this will be a virtual format.
- Everyone is encouraged to participate in the 4th annual gathering of Indigenous arts, culture and traditions. The theme this year is ***Mighty Niagara and the Great Lakes Watershed***. Many events are free and streamed virtually. For more information and to view the full schedule, please visit online: <https://www.celebrationofnations.ca/>.

E. STAFF REPORTS

1. Secondary Principals – Adele Filice

- Adele Filice is now the Secondary Vice-Principal of Niagara Catholic Virtual School. The Administration has been busy getting ready for the start of the Virtual School. They have been working through the glitches getting things up and running in Maplewood. She is excited about the days ahead and looks forward to welcoming students to the Virtual School.

2. **Elementary Principals – Chris Kerho**

- Chris Kerho is very excited to have students and staff back in the school and everyone is excited to be back in school too.

3. **Special Education – Danny Giancola**

i) New Hire

- Angela De Lisio was recently hired as the Student Support Facilitator. This is a new position for Niagara Catholic. We welcome Angela to Student Support and Niagara Catholic.

ii) Behaviour Resource Teacher (BRT) Group

- BRTs will be partnering with providing presentations with LDANR. On **Tuesday, September 22nd** from 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm, our BRTs will represent Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) in a virtual workshop for parents/caregivers of students with Learning Disabilities. The Learning Disabilities Chapters (LDA) across Ontario are hosting a back-to-school workshop for parents/caregivers. The workshop includes two sessions, the second of which the parents/caregivers will break out into sessions based on their geographic region. The NCDSB representatives will be available to answer parent questions regarding how the start of school is progressing.
- On **Thursday, October 29, 2020**, participation in the Some Assembly Required (S.O.A.R.) Self-advocacy and Coping Skills Program for children in grades 7 - 8 with a diagnosed, identified, or suspected Learning Disability.
- On **Thursday, October 29, 2020**, our BRTs will be discussing with parents/caregivers what the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process is, and what changes they will see when their child transitions into High School.
- For further information, please contact any of our BRTs: Anthony Di Toro (anthony.ditoro@ncdsb.com), Alfonso Monachino (alfonso.monachino@ncdsb.com) or Maria Kish (maria.kish@ncdsb.com).

iii) Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Group

- ABA Supervisors ran multiple workshops in June for both families and educators in conjunction with Bethesda titled “**Supporting Learning at Home**” to assist families and school staff with strategies and supports.
- ABA team facilitated a one week virtual camp for students with ASD (20 students registered). Each student was provided with a box that was dropped off by an ABA Facilitator to their home that contained all the materials and resources including a task analysis and videos for each activity.
- ABA supervisors co-facilitated a transition to high school program for students with ASD with a focus on providing resources and priming both parents and students on what to expect (alongside Bethesda and our Mental Health team).
- ABA facilitators will be stationed in schools in the upcoming week for a minimum of 1 week at a time to support all students who would benefit from ABA.
- ABA team created tip sheets for families and educators throughout the shutdown to support behavioural and educational needs.

iv) Special Education Summer Program

- This Summer Program was offered for students with Learning Disabilities, Developmental Disabilities, ASD, Intellectual Disabilities and others. This was a four-week program led by a classroom teacher and an ERT in a synchronous and asynchronous format. These Summer Program fell under the Continuing Education umbrella under the direction of School Principal, Chris Boyer and School Vice-Principal, Danny Giancola. This program ran for 4 weeks and classes were offered on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The Summer Program received very positive feedback from parents, students and staff.

v) Special Education Re-Opening Plan

- The Student Support Department is actively working to support students who are transitioning into Kindergarten, Grade 9 and post-secondary. We also have students who have joined Niagara Catholic from other school boards or who come to us from the Niagara Children's Centre.
- The Program Resource Teachers have begun work with long-range planning for our Gifted Modules. We are currently working through the details as to how these modules will run now given the fact that no in-person instruction will take place.
- The Student Support Department is currently working to identify those students with special education needs who will be part of the Niagara Catholic Virtual School. Our staff will work with the home school staff and the staff of the virtual school to provide support where necessary. We aim to provide a seamless form of support that mirrors traditional in-school contact as best as possible.
- Danny Giancola gave a summary of Niagara Catholic's Re-Opening Plan. A copy of the Re-Opening presentation was later emailed to all Committee Members. The full Re-Opening Plan can also be accessed from the Board's website.
<https://cdn.niagaracatholic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Niagara-Catholic-School-Reopening-Plan-August-13-Updated-September-14.pdf>

4. Gino Pizzoferrato – Superintendent of Education

- Superintendent Pizzoferrato was actively fielding questions during the meeting pertaining to the following topics:
 - Sub-committee creation for a policy review.
 - Request for Committee Representative on NCPIC suggesting volunteering on a rotation basis.
 - A discussion briefly regarding cohorting in our Secondary Schools.
 - Request to review meeting protocols and procedures as a point of reference to begin our shared work.

F. TRUSTEE REPORTS

- Trustee Burtnik and Trustee Burkholder both thanked the dedication and efforts of the formal

Senior Administrative Council that prepared staff and students for the safe re-opening of School Year 2020-2021. They also welcomed the newly appointed Senior Administrative Council and they are extremely confident that they too will continue to work for the safety and well-being of all students and staff of Niagara Catholic.

G. STUDENT REPORT

- Serena Butera is in Cohort A and gave an overview of how things are like being back in school. She mentioned that there were some bussing issues on Opening Day, but she expects that things will continue to improve each day. She is excited to be back in school.

H. NCPIC REPORT

- The next NCPIC meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, September 10, 2020**. During June's Meeting, Kelsey Dick Huxley had put her name forth to seat on NCPIC as the SEAC Representation. Unfortunately, her work schedule has changed, and she is no longer able to seat on NCPIC.
- Chair Racine asked the group for a volunteer for the next NCPIC meeting. Since there were no volunteers, Chair Racine graciously offered to attend. Unfortunately, at this time she is unable to commit to attending any future meetings.
- Jennifer Lanese will email the group later this week, hoping that a Committee Member will be available for November's NCPIC meeting.
- The group will get updated by Jennifer Lanese if there is a SEAC representative for November's NCPIC meeting.

I. NOTICES OF MOTION

- There were no Notices of Motion.

J. FUTURE MEETINGS / INFORMATION ITEMS

- Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, there is nothing to report at this time.

K. MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION FOR LIFE

- Chair Racine asked all attendees to observe a moment of silence during these uncertain times.

L. NEXT MEETING

- **Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 6:30 pm** – format to be determined based on current COVID-19 restrictions.

M. ADJOURNMENT

- Moved by Pina Palombo
- Seconded by Rita Smith

THAT the September 9, 2020 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee be adjourned.
CARRIED

- This meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.