



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2020

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee held on **Wednesday, October 7, 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 led opening 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	✓	
Huxley, Kelsey	Indigenous Community Member		✓
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 	✓	
Butera, Serena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Senate Representative 	✓	
Fera, Frank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of the Board 	✓	
Filice, Adele	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal, Secondary 	✓	
Kerho, Chris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal, Elementary 	✓	

The following staff members were in attendance:

Gino Pizzoferrato, Superintendent of Education, **Camillo Cipriano**, Director of Education, **Danny Giancola**, Coordinator of Special Education, **Vincent Mancuso**, Behaviour Resource Teacher, and **Jennifer Lanese**, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant to Superintendent Pizzoferrato.

3. Approval of the Agenda

- Moved by Andrew Howcroft
- Seconded by Pina Palombo

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approves the Agenda of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **October 7, 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 September 9, 2020.

- Moved by Rita Smith
- Seconded by Serena Butera

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approves the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **September 9, 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 provided a summary of the Board By-Laws, Policy No. 100.1 to the group.
- All Committee Members were provided with a copy for future reference.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato opened the floor to address any questions and concerns.
- Discussion followed.

2. Parent Outreach

2.1 SEAC Brochure

- Upon further review of the current SEAC Brochure it was discovered that some of the information was not up to date.
- Lorraine Smith put a motion forth to update the SEAC Brochure.
- Discussion followed.

2.2 Parent Contact List

- Jennifer Lanese will email the Committee Members to ensure that the information is correct and up to date.
- Once updated, the information would be added to the SEAC Brochure and presented to the Committee Member at November's Meeting for discussion.
- Final consideration would be reviewed by the Communication Sub-Committee.

3. Other Related Items

3.1 Review of the Goals and Vision for 2020-2021

- Chair Racine provided a review of Goals and Vision for School Year 2020-2021.
- This was a review from September's Meeting and the Goals and Vision were also provided in the September's Minutes.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato suggested to consider including a goal related to Special Education and supporting families of identified students in the virtual school.
- No other new initiatives will be added to the Goals and Visions for School Year 2020-2021.
- The Committee Members discussed SEAC's Goals and Vision in length.

3.2 Surveys

- Many of the Committee Members expressed an interest on creating surveys for our stakeholders.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato shared that this one also one of the topics discussed at NCPIC's last meeting.
- He further explained that survey consideration will be aligned with NCPIC and the Board to meet the needs of all Board identified areas so as to not create "survey fatigue" and to ensure that outcomes of the surveys are actionable.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato will maintain contact with Superintendent Forsyth-Sells regarding NCPIC's direction on this topic.
- He closed by advising that any new or additional information will be shared with the Survey Sub-Committee for further review and consideration.

3.3 Presentation by Dr. Sheila Bennett and Terri Pauco

- Superintendent Pizzoferrato announced to the Committee Members that Dr. Bennett is on sabbatical under January 2021.
- Dr. Bennett still expressed an interest to provide a presentation for SEAC, but this will have to wait until she returns from sabbatical.
- At this time it was decided due to current COVID-19 restrictions, SEAC should plan a virtual presentation with a tentative date of May 2021.
- Dr. Bennett will update Superintendent Pizzoferrato with her availability.
- Chair Racine reminded the Committee Members the purpose of Terri Pauco's presentation.
- Terri Pauco wanted to discuss how the Church could make families with special needs children feel more welcome in Church.
- After discussing the topics of the two key-note speakers, Superintendent Pizzoferrato wanted to offer for consideration that the Committee Members plan two separate presentations instead of combining the two key-note speakers into one session.
- He further explained that the key-note speakers would draw individual community interest due to the nature and complexity of their topics.

- This recommendation was supported by the Committee Members.
- Andrew Howcroft put a motion forth to have two separate presentations instead of one presentation.
- Discussion followed.

3.4 Sub-Committees

- Jennifer Lanese emailed the list of Sub-Committees to the Committee Members during the meeting.
- Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Sub-Committees have been unable to meet as a group.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato suggested that each Sub-Committee decide as a group when best to meet.
- He further suggested that each Sub-Committee appoint a lead as a representative for each Sub-Committee to share correspondence/updates with Superintendent Pizzoferrato and Jennifer Lanese.
- All appointed Sub-Committee Leads were asked to email Jennifer Lanese this information.

3.5 Student Support Department Intervention

- Superintendent Pizzoferrato presented items related to the supports being offered at the virtual school and the need for families to continue to be their child's advocate while directing their communications to the home school Educational Resource Teachers, (ERTs) so that we can be assured that all students are receiving proper service. It is the partnership between the virtual teacher, the home school and the family that will ensure each child's success. There have been challenges but with these partnerships working collaboratively together, the situation has been improving.

4. Policies Under 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

- [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. SEAC REPORTS

1. Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – Madeline Zoelman

- LDANR have begun their literacy and numeracy programs for the Fall 2020 session.
 - 1) Literacy is completely staffed and approximately 79 participants have enrolled.
 - 2) Numeracy is completely staffed and approximately 20 participants have enrolled.
- The SOAR Secondary (transition program) begins the **week of October 19th**.
- To date, they do not have enough participants enrolled in the SOAR (Post-Secondary) program, so they are unsure if they will be offering it.
- They are holding an information night for their programming on **Wednesday, October 14, 2020** at 6:00 pm.
- Their winter programming will be offered online and also using Microsoft Teams.
- Enrolment for their Winter programs opens on **November 23, 2020**.
- This month is LD awareness month! They are hosting a social media campaign. Check out their facebook page for further information. <https://www.facebook.com/LDANiagara/>.

2. Niagara Children’s Centre – Dorothy Harvey

- The Niagara Children’s Centre (NCC) is running their “***Help Kids Shine***” campaign. This is an annual campaign that runs each year to support Niagara Children’s Centre. The Campaign is run in conjunction with Bell Media and 105.7 EZ Rock, 97.7 HTZ-FM and 610 CKTB. This campaign is a vital way for the Centre to share the impact stories, raise awareness about the Centre, and raise much-needed donations to support the Centre.

3. Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Karen Murphy

- NIL Report

4. Down Syndrome Niagara – Pina Palombo

- NIL Report

5. Community Living Welland/Pelham – Andrew Howcroft

- 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 Huxley

- NIL Report

E. STAFF REPORTS

1. Elementary Principals – Chris Kerho

- Chris Kerho shared some good news stories from our Elementary Schools. During his presentation, he shared his screen with the Committee Members to highlight these two stories.

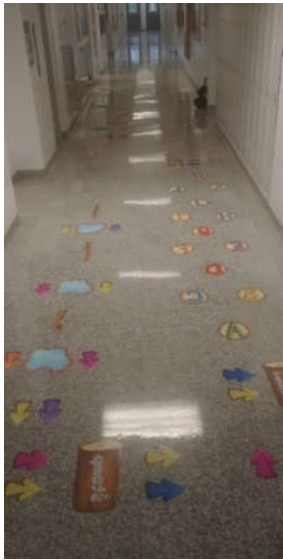
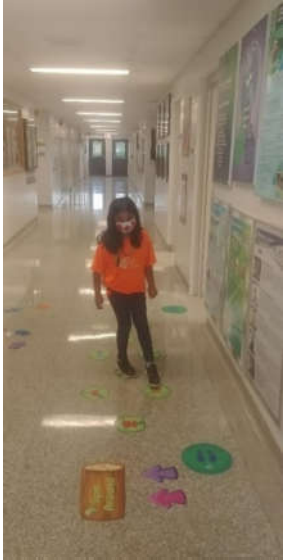
i) Sacred Heart Elementary School

- o Students from Sacred Heart Catholic Elementary School recognized Orange Shirt Day with the KAIROS Blanket Exercise. This is a unique, participatory history lesson, which was developed in collaboration with Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers and educators in order to help foster truth, understanding, respect and reconciliation among Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Shown below are “**Sacred Heart Stars**”: Lailah, Lidiah and Aidan. These students truly recognize that Every Child Matters!



ii) St Philomena Catholic Elementary School

- o Below is the new Sensory Hallway that has been developed for students with Special Needs at St Philomena Catholic Elementary School.



2. Secondary Principals – Adele Filice

- Adele Filice shared some good news stories from our Secondary Schools.

i. Saint Francis Catholic Secondary School – Nutrition Program

- As of **Wednesday, October 30th**, Saint Francis Catholic Secondary School re-started their Breakfast Program in a new “grab and go” format. Utilizing gloves and masks, several of the students of the Special Education Classroom help to count out the “grab and go” items, placing them onto the carts and into the bins provided by Niagara Nutrition Partners. Although the format is very different this year, the Special Education Classroom students continue to serve the Saint Francis community each day, helping to provide a healthy start each day to the Phoenix community.
- This new format has provided “hands on” learning opportunities for the Special Education Classroom Students.
- Even though COVID-19 has impacted the way that they do things in the school setting, the Special Education Classroom students still have the opportunity to participate in several “experiential learning” opportunities this semester. Some of the students are participating in a Music class, or in a Physical Education class, or in a Photography class, or in Co-operative Education opportunities. It is nice to see that all of the students have embraced the importance of adherence to health and safety protocols at all times. The administrators and the staff are very proud of all of the students’ dedication to safety, allowing them to participate in additional learning opportunities at Saint Francis.

ii. Lakeshore Catholic – Sobeys’ Bakery Placement

- The store’s manager has indicated that Lauren Patterson is starting to come out of her quiet shell and chatting more with the bakery staff. She is eager to learn and open to instruction. Lauren is getting involved in all facets of the bakery, from cake decorating, to flat icing to packaging and labelling of products to product placement and display. After some time modelling, Lauren is able to assigned duties completely independently. Great job Lauren!

iii. Niagara Catholic Virtual Secondary School

- Niagara Catholic Virtual Secondary School has worked diligently to provide additional supports for their students. Some Educational Assistants (EAs) have been attached to classroom, and the home schools have supported virtual school in many ways. The EAs from home schools have supported their own students that are attending virtual. This is very much appreciated by the Administrators of the Niagara Catholic Virtual School. Principals, VPs, guidance counsellors, ERTs and Child Youth Workers (CYWs) have all been accessible to the Virtual School and have offered support and solutions.
- In terms of IEPs the home school ERT is responsible for completing all of their students’ Individual Education Plan (IEPs) regardless of school location. Both the ERT from the home school and the classroom teacher from Virtual will have access to collaborate when and if needed. The contact information of ERTs from each secondary school will be available to all Virtual teachers in the event they need to collaborate regarding the success of our Niagara Catholic students. In an effort to maintain fluid conversation to the home schools, they will also be notified of the Virtual staff member’s name and

applicable courses in the event they need to reach out to them regarding a student's success.

- Messages continue to go home to inform parents of the processes of the Virtual Secondary School through School Messenger.
- They will continue to work towards creating processes that will support all students at Niagara Catholic regardless of the modality of learning that the student has chosen at this time.

3. Special Education – Danny Giancola

- Program Resource Teachers (PRTs) are offering a workshop that will focus on how to deliver IEP accommodations in a virtual classroom. Two sessions are provided and the ERTs and the classroom teachers from all schools including the Virtual School are welcome to attend. This will be offered through a Virtual Google Meeting.
- The Student Support Department is in the planning stages of offering an in-service for the ERTs that are new to this role.
- eLite is our online platform that allows the submission of documentation by our schools to receive support from our team members. This system eliminates paper copies and allows for much more efficient tracking of services provided. The ERTs and the Principals will be trained on tentative dates set for **October 14 and October 15**. eLite is student-focused and allows both school and team staff to record strategies, recommendations and intervention that has been provided to the student. This record will stay with the student and allows all those involved to see the history of support provided.
- Our technology department and our IEP lead, Frank Napoli have been working to prepare the IEP engine to allow virtual school staff to access IEPs for those students in their class. The home school ERT will remain closely connected to the virtual teacher to provide that important support and collaboration to develop the IEP while in consultation with the parents if necessary.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato and the Special Education Coordinators have been working with Human Resources to add 12 new EAs to our schools.
- The Student Support Department is in the process of hiring a new Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Lead, a new ABA Facilitator and two new Speech and Language Pathologists (SLPs). We look forward to working with these new hires.

4. Gino Pizzoferrato – Superintendent of Education

- Congratulations to Michael Jacques on his most recent book release. His book is entitled, ***"I Belong, Can I Play"***. Although Michael did not attend October's Meeting, Superintendent Pizzoferrato extended his congratulations to Michael on another successful book launch which was clearly evident by the heavy twitter activity.
- Congratulations Michael, you continue to amaze us! Andrew Howcroft promised to share this with Michael on SEAC's behalf.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato brought up for discussion, Cohort C student attendance on exam days. The plan is to have Cohort C students attend school on all exam days. This is similar to how the other students in Cohort A and Cohort B would attend school, and not attend school on the two reporting days through the year was shared with SEAC for input. Through discussion, SEAC supports the plan being suggested by Superintendent Farrell and Superintendent Pizzoferrato.

Items for Discussion at Next Meeting:

- Discussion at the end of the meeting regarding the next meeting being virtual with the possibility of an in-person aspect was shared. It was concluded that the Committee Members would be advised of the format of November's Meeting two weeks prior, (i.e., virtual or in-person or a combination of both). This would allow Committee Members to plan their participation accordingly.
- Just prior to the conclusion of the meeting Superintendent Pizzoferrato provided input to the Committee Members regarding questions brought forth by Serena Butera, Student Senate pertaining to her observation at Mary Ward Catholic Elementary after an individual tested positive with COVID-19. Serena explained that she became aware of this situation because her younger siblings attend Mary Ward Catholic Elementary School.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato opened the floor and addressed questions and comments.
- Further discussion followed.

F. TRUSTEE REPORTS

1. Trustee Burtnik

- Trustee Burtnik thanked Niagara Catholic's staff for going above and beyond to serve our Niagara Catholic families. Even though the challenges are many, Niagara Catholic's focus is on meeting the needs of our students during these unprecedented times.
- Trustee Burtnik is grateful for the staff's dedication and wished everyone a Thanksgiving that is blessed and she reminded the group to never forget that we have Catholic Education that is so blessed.

2. Chair of the Board Fera

- Chair of the Board Fera shared with the group that several weeks ago, a group of NCDSB's trustees were invited to participate in a regional virtual meeting with the other Ontario Catholic School Boards.
- The objective was to discuss the challenges that School Boards have faced during this pandemic.
- Many of the Board's trustees attended the virtual meeting including Director of Education Capriano.
- The Chair of the School Boards and the Vice-Chair of the School Boards made presentations during the virtual meeting.
- According to Chair of the Board Fera's observation, the greatest challenges for most Boards was to meet the needs of the virtual learners.
- He further stressed that one of the challenges was keeping class size lower in order to meet the needs of high risk students who cannot attend school and transferring to virtual learning.
- He also shared that another challenge that most Boards were facing was having to organize, hire and train staff for virtual instruction. He explained that this is a lengthy process that requires a great deal of time which makes it even more challenging at the start of the School Year.

G. STUDENT REPORT

- Serena Butera shared with the Committee Members that the new School Year has brought much change. At Saint Paul Catholic High School, student leaders such as the Student Council and the Athletic Council are initiating activities to engage the student body. Through activities like their version of “*Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader*” video, classroom TikTok contests and through the planning and execution of the School’s Pilgrimage, they are providing all students with the opportunity to feel included and enjoy their time at school during this very different year.
- As well, the Student Senate is launching their Mask Sticker fundraiser. Each school will have a customized logo with the slogan “*Conquers COVID*”. Proceeds from each sticker sold will go to individualized charities chosen by the Student Senators. These stickers will be available on School Cash Online very soon!
- Overall, the hybrid learning platform has proven itself to be useful in time management. A few of Serena’s peers who have an IEP are transferring to Virtual Learning to better manage their time and their learning.

H. NCPIC REPORT

- The Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee, (NCPIC), held the last meeting of 2019-2020 electronically on **Thursday, September 10, 2020** at 6:30 pm. The NCPIC welcomed back their members and staff representatives. New attendees to the September meeting were Director of Education Cipriano, Superintendent of Education Pizzoferrato, Superintendent of Education Kinney, and Controller of Facilities Services Euale. Chair Racine represented SEAC that evening too.
- Nomination forms for parent/guardian representatives on the NCPIC closed on **Friday, October 9, 2020**.
- Chair Racine made another appeal to the Committee Members for a volunteer to represent SEAC at the next NCPIC meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, November 5, 2020** at 6:30 pm.
- Any interested Committee Member were asked to email Jennifer Lanese their availability.

I. NOTICES OF MOTION

- **Motion To Update the SEAC Brochure With Current Information.**

Moved by – Lorraine Smith

Seconded by – Pina Palombo

THAT the Special Education Advisory Council will update the SEAC Brochure to ensure that all Agencies’ contact information is correct. Once the SEAC Brochure has been updated, it will be forwarded to the SEAC’s Communication Sub-Committee for review and approval.

CARRIED

- **Motion To Have Two Separate Presentations Instead of a Combined Presentation.**

Moved by – Andrew Howcroft

Seconded by – Madeline Zoelman

THAT the Special Education Advisory Council will arrange two separate presentations, one presentation with Dr. Bennett as the key-note speaker and one presentation with Terri Pauco as the key-note speaker due to the complexity and content of their topics.

CARRIED

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, November 4, 2020 at 6:30 pm** – Microsoft Teams Meeting due to the current COVID-19 restrictions. The Committee Members would be notified by email the format of the meeting.

M. ADJOURNMENT

- Moved by Andrew Howcroft
- Seconded by Rita Smith

THAT the **October 7, 2020** meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee be adjourned.

CARRIED

- This meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.