



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2020

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee held on **Wednesday, November 4, 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		✓
Huxley, Kelsey	Indigenous Community Member	✓	
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	✓	
Thomas, Kerry	Community Living Welland/Pelham	✓	
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 Student Support, **Vincent Mancuso**, Behaviour Resource Teacher, and **Jennifer Lanese**, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant to Superintendent Pizzoferrato.

3. Approval of the Agenda

- Moved by Lorraine Smith
- Seconded by Rita Smith

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approves the Agenda of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **November 4, 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 October 7, 2020

- Moved by Madeline Zoelman
- Seconded by Lorraine Smith

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approves the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **October 7, 2020** as presented.

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATIONS

- There were no presentations at this time.

C. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Secondary Appeal for SEAC Representative on NCPIC

- Superintendent Pizzoferrato made another appeal for a representative from SEAC to join NCPIC.
- After much discussion, it was decided that Jennifer Lanese would inquire if a member from NCPIC would be interested in this role. She would explore this option by contacting Yvonne Anderson, Recording Secretary of NCPIC.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato would provide an update at the next meeting.

2. Parent Outreach

2.1 Terri Pauco, December/January Presentation

- It was decided that this presentation will take place during either January or February's SEAC Meeting.

- Superintendent Pizzoferrato has asked Lidia Di Lorenzo, Religion and Family Life Consultant for Niagara Catholic to join Terri Pauco in this presentation.
- Input for the scope of the presentation would be circulated to the Committee Members to assist Terri and Lidia with their presentation.
- The results will be shared at December's meeting.

2.2 Dr. Sheila Bennett – May Presentation

- Superintendent Pizzoferrato has not been able to confirm the presentation date with Dr. Sheila Bennett.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato will update the Committee Members once he gets confirmation from Dr. Bennett.
- Input for the scope of the presentation would be circulated to the Committee Members to assist Dr. Bennett with her presentation.
- The results will be shared at December's meeting.

3. Other Related Items

3.1 SEAC Brochure Update

- Jennifer Lanese has collected updated information from the SEAC Committee Members for the SEAC Brochure.
- Those changes have been reflected in the updated SEAC Brochure.
- A copy of the updated SEAC Brochure was uploaded to Microsoft Teams under the SEAC Team files for all Committee Members to view.
- The Communication Sub-Committee Members will discuss changes to make it more user-friendly and informative for families of Niagara Catholic.
- Those changes will be discussed at a future meeting.

3.2 Special Education Brochure Update

- The Student Support Department will review the current Special Education Brochure.
- Jennifer Lanese will collect updated information for the Special Education Brochure.
- Once the Special Education Brochure has been updated, it will be presented to the SEAC Committee Members for review and discussion.

3.3 Annual Review of the Special Education Plan

- The Student Support Coordinators update the Special Education Plan every year.
- SEAC Committee Members are encouraged to view the current Special Education Plan by copying and pasting the link below:
<https://cdn.niagaracatholic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Special-Education-Plan-2020-WHITEBG.pdf>

3.4 Sub-Committees

- The SEAC Committee Members were reminded to arrange an agreeable time to meet to discuss objectives and goals.
- An updated Sub-Committee list was uploaded to Microsoft Teams under the SEAC Team files for all Committee Members to view.
- We are looking forward to hearing updates from the appointed Leads of the Sub-Committees.

3.5 Virtual School Presentation

- Adele Filice presented a slideshow to the Committee Members describing how our Virtual Learners are being supported.
- It has been a collaborative effort from the IT Department, Digital Learning Team, Student Support Team, Student Information Service Department, Virtual Teaching Staff, Home Schools' Administration and their staff as well as the continued guidance and support from Senior Administrative Council.
- In the slideshow, there were several examples of students participating in virtual learning, along with interaction with the classroom teacher.
- It was a great snapshot of Niagara Catholic's Virtual Learners.
- The slide show has also been uploaded to Microsoft Teams under the SEAC Team files for all Committee Members to view again.
- Thank you Adele for sharing this informative slideshow with SEAC.

4. Policies Under Review

- There are currently no Policies and Administrative Guidelines being reviewed as part of the cyclical Policy and Administrative Guidelines Review process at this time.

D. SEAC REPORTS

1. Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – Madeline Zoelman

- Program applications will open on **November 23rd** at 6:00 am for the Winter term. The Winter term will begin starting the first week of February.
- LDANR was able to offer SOAR secondary and post-secondary this session and these programs will commence next session.
- Some of the feedback received on SOAR:
 - *"I have to say the SOAR program is the best program we have been involved with so far. Not that the others are not great, they are. We missed the first session for the students and so he listened in on the parent session that week with me, where the gentleman from Brock spoke. Nicholas listened so intently to him and realized that the struggles he has learning are not because he is stupid, but rather because of how his brain is structured. He did make the second session with the other students and made a second realization...that he is not alone in his struggle and that opportunities he never thought possible might still be possible. This morning for the first time EVER...he said he might want to go to college or university."*
- LDANR will be offering numeracy, literacy, transition, and social skills programs in the Winter session.

2. Niagara Children's Centre – Dorothy Harvey

- The Niagara Children's Centre (NCC) continues to follow the Health Sector and Regulatory College Directives concerning to the resumption of in-person services.
- The NCC has been providing services virtually where possible but they also provided in-person services to include all children where virtual was not appropriate; all children where families do

not have the capacity for virtual (due to technical or other issues); and all children where families prefer in-person.

- All medical and other clinics (including the ASD diagnostic services) are being provided in-person.
- In terms of services for schools, they were working with each of the School Board's Special Education departments to coordinate services:
 - o For all School-Based Rehabilitation Service (SBRS) services which include: Occupational Therapy (OT), Physiotherapy (PT) and Speech and Language Pathology (SLP) for speech needs to be provided to school-aged children in their publicly-funded school, they have continued to offer virtual services as well as in-Centre services through the school closure as well as summer.
 - o The mandate of the SBRS at NCC is to provide access to OT, PT and SLP services for students with rehabilitation/habilitation needs for the student to attend school, participate in school routines and receive instruction. The program provides in-school rehabilitation services to enable the student's attendance and participation in publicly funded educational settings.
 - o For the return to school in September, they developed a phased approach to resuming in-person services at school that takes into consideration: the needs of schools and students; the requirements we have as a health provider; school essential visitor protocols.
 - o As a health provider, NCC is required to actively screen children before each appointment. This involves calling parents the day before or the day of and going through the Health Sector COVID screen which differs from the School Screen. If parents do not respond to their call or the family/child does not pass their COVID screen the in-person appointment cannot proceed.
 - o In terms of the school protocols, NCC is limiting the number of classrooms and schools that each therapist can go to on a daily basis as well as using higher levels of PPE in to ensure that their staff do not need to self-isolate if they visit a classroom that subsequently is identified as having positive cases.
 - o The primary services that are currently being provided in schools are PT and OT.
 - o SLP continues to primarily be delivered virtually with families at home. The feedback from families has been extremely positive as they feel more engaged with the SLPs services and can provide more carryover at home. For those cases where NCC is providing virtual at home, they will continue to liaise with school staff and they have started a pilot of providing virtual services to children at school for cases where the parent does not have the capacity for virtual at home.
 - o For children engaged in virtual learning, they continue to provide both virtual as well as in-person services at the Centre and liaise with the virtual classroom staff as needed.
- Given that the Centre is now delivering School-Based Rehabilitation services with their staff, they have revised all of their referral forms and are in the process of revising the service delivery

models. Meetings to review the changes have been coordinated with the Special Education staff and have included presentations to ERTs and through the school board's Speech and Language Pathologists.

- They are planning to meet with the preschool partners and both School Boards in November to develop revised Transition to School processes for September 2021 as a result of COVID-19.

3. Indigenous Community Member – Kelsey Huxley

- The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is pleased to offer the Mental Health program with a wide range of services and supports to Métis children, youth, and adults across the province. Services are delivered in person, over the phone, or by video conference. Through this Program, the MNO can provide seamless and timely access to comprehensive assessment, treatment, and follow-up services which are offered by professionals. There is a 24-hour Mental Health & Addictions Crisis Line at **1-877-767-7572**.
- For non-urgent matters or help navigating mental health and addiction supports in your community, please contact their confidential support services line at **1-800-263-4889** or by email at video@metisnation.org. For more information, please visit their website at <http://www.metisnation.org/>.

4. Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Karen Murphy

- Autism Ontario would like to share an upcoming workshop that is available from the Provincial Office entitled: Emotional Toolkit for Black Caregivers: How to Manage Stress and Challenges Across: <https://www.autismontario.com/civicrm/event/inof?id=4597>.
- They are also offering some great webinars including:
 - o The Housing Project – Advocacy 101 on **November 19, 2020**, <https://www.autismontario.com/civicrm/event/info?id=4332>.
 - o Jordan's Principle – Understanding the Funding and How to Apply on **November 26, 2020**, www.autismontario.com/civicrm/event/info?id=4521.
 - o Collaborative Approach and Proactive Solutions on **December 10, 2020**, <https://www.autismontario.com/civicrm/event/info?id=4530>.
 - o Their chapter will be offering several FREE activities in November including snowman craft kits, cookie making kits and Christmas ornament kits. Families can sign up by visiting their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/AONiagara>.
 - o Currently, there is a waitlist for the activity kits, but parents are encouraged to sign up on the waitlist. For additional information, please visit their Facebook page.

5. Down Syndrome Niagara – Pina Palombo

- Down Syndrome Awareness Week is being celebrated from **November 1 to November 7, 2020** in Canada. Due to the COVID's restrictions, there were no events planned by the Down Syndrome Niagara group; however daily facts about down syndrome were posted on their Facebook page. Also, parents and members of Down Syndrome Niagara shared stories and the journeys of their personal experiences. For more information, please check out their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/www.dsaniagara.org/>.

- Last month, Club Italia in Niagara Falls **donated \$1800.00** to their group by running one of their curbside take-out pasta dinners. A special thank you is extended to the Ladies Auxiliary of Club Italia for generously choosing, Down Syndrome Niagara as their 2019/2020 Charity.
- From 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm on **December 13, 2020**, Club Italia is hosting a Christmas Party for their Down Syndrome families. It will be a drive-by, COVID Style/Social distancing Christmas Party.
- DSN members will receive one gift bag per family, provided membership renewal fees for 2020 have been paid. Just a reminder that all membership fees are due by **November 30, 2020**.
- In order to comply with Niagara Public Health's requirements, social distancing guidelines will be in effect. All families are asked to remain in their vehicle and one of their team members will be issuing each family a gift bag. Facemasks must be worn by all attendees at all times.
- The next Board Meeting will be announced at a later time.

6. Community Living Welland/Pelham – Kerry Thomas

- NIL Report

7. Mainstream – Lorraine Smith

- By phasing out the Mainstream's Resource Centre completely the Options Niagara Enhanced Program was created. This program provides supports to adults who have a developmental difference.
- About the Options Niagara - Enhanced Program
 - o Options Niagara is a region-wide program that provides support to adults with a developmental difference as they connect to their community.
 - o A Person-Centered Planning process is used to help each person create and achieve their dreams and desires as well as build a network of support within their community.
 - o Learning opportunities are provided through training and connecting people to other supports in areas such as;
 - goal planning
 - rights, respect and responsibility
 - self-advocacy
 - interpersonal skills / relationship building
 - supported community volunteer and work placements
 - healthy living and nutrition
 - anger management
 - abuse prevention
 - food handling and cooking
 - employment and volunteerism
 - literacy and basic skills
 - healthy relationships
 - making community connections
 - problem-solving
 - money skills and management
 - o Options Facilitators
 - Options Facilitators work with people they support to help develop the skills and connections they need to be successful and achieve the level of independence they have chosen.

8. Community Living Port Colborne / Wainfleet – Rita Smith

- NIL Report

9. Pathstone Mental Health – Bill Helmeczi

- NIL Report

E. STAFF REPORTS

1. Elementary Principals – Chris Kerho

- NIL Report

2. Secondary Principals – Adele Filice

- NIL Report

3. Special Education – Danny Giancola

- The Student Support Department has recently hired two Speech and Language Pathologists (SLPs) positions, two Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Lead positions and two Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) facilitator positions. Niagara Catholic welcomes Kelly Keighan and Brittany Iannone as the new SLPs, Julia Nicholson and Angela De Lisio as the new ABA Leads and Kayla Fuller and Darcy Fox as the new ABA facilitators.
- Our new ABA support model now includes an ABA Lead with a BCBA (Board Certified Behaviour Analyst). This new model of service will allow for Tier 3 intervention when necessary. Julia Nemcko has been designated with this new BCBA position.
- IEPs have been successfully provided to parents through the Maplewood Parent Portal. A Permission Click form has been used to obtain consent and allow parents/guardians to request further discussion regarding their child's IEP. This paperless process allows for a more efficient means of providing this important document.
- e-Lite has been launched and is now in the hands of the school staff. e-Lite is an electronic platform that allows for the creation of forms such as School-Based Teams and Case Conferences. It also allows staff to submit Requests for Student Support as well as the on-going tracking of recommendations and intervention that is provided for students.
- IPRCs have been completed for students in our Secondary Special Education class. We wish them all the very best this school year.
- Final preparation is underway for our first Gifted Program module this school year. Our Program Resource Teacher staff are working to confirm all details for this Virtual module. This is the first of its kind in Niagara Catholic. More information will soon be made available to school staff.
- BMS (Behaviour Management Systems) is being offered for necessary staff who require full and refresher training. BMS allows staff to utilize proactive strategies required to deescalate student behaviour.

F. TRUSTEE REPORTS

- NIL Report

G. STUDENT REPORT

- Serena Butera shared with the Committee Members the following update. This past month at Saint Paul Catholic High School, they have been focusing on promoting activities for student engagement through Student Council's "Halloweek" and our Pilgrimage. During Halloweek, they had a series of activities that all students could participate in, including their Pumpkin Painting Contest. Their Special Education classroom created an autism awareness pumpkin. Their remote pilgrimage is doing well. So far, students and faculty have raised over **\$5000.00**. Student Council had created a video to advertise for this event. Administration and teachers had come up with amazing incentives to encourage student participation including a costume day for our Vice Principals which occurred on **November 4, 2020**.

H. NCPIC REPORT

- NIL Report

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. NEXT MEETING

- **Wednesday, December 2, 2020 at 6:30 pm** - format to be determined based on current COVID-19 restrictions. The Committee Members would be notified by email of the format of the meeting.

L. ADJOURNMENT

- Moved by Kerry Thomas
- Seconded by Karen Murphy

THAT the November 4, 2020 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee be adjourned.
CARRIED

- This meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.