



NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**MINUTES OF THE
NIAGARA CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL MEETING**

JANUARY 7, 2021

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee, held on Thursday, January 7, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Chair Vernelli called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Opening Prayer

Fr. Paul MacNeil led the opening prayer with special intentions for our neighbours south of the border.

2. Roll Call:

Parent Members	Geographical Area	Present	Excused	Absent
Shonna Daly	Fort Erie/Port Colborne/Wainfleet		√	
Jessica Coutinho	Grimsby/Lincoln/West Lincoln/Pelham	√		
Todd Ulbinas	Grimsby/Lincoln/West Lincoln/Pelham		√	
Mary-Kate O'Hara-Skubel	Merritton/Thorold	√		
Rita Colling	Niagara Falls/Niagara-on-the-Lake	√		
Marilyn Fabiano	Niagara Falls/Niagara-on-the-Lake	√		
Chris Kouroushis	Niagara Falls/Niagara-on-the-Lake	√		
Jitto Tom Uthup	Niagara Falls/Niagara-on-the-Lake	√		
Jeremy Harb	St. Catharines	√		
George Roussos	St. Catharines	√		
Melanie Oakes-Flegg	Welland		√	
Carrie Vernelli	Welland	√		
Shelley Gilbert				
Shelley Gilbert	Society of St. Vincent de Paul	√		
Fr. Paul MacNeil				
Fr. Paul MacNeil	Bishop/Diocesan Representative	√		
Allan Buri				
Allan Buri	Secondary Student Senate Representative	√		
Trustees				
Dino Sicoli				
Dino Sicoli	Trustee		√	
Leanne Prince				
Leanne Prince	Trustee	√		

Regrets: Trustee Sicoli, Shonna Daly, Melanie Oakes-Flegg and Todd Ulbinas.

The following staff were in attendance: **Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells**, Superintendent of Education, **Joe Tornabuono**, Elementary Principal, **Lou Stranges**, Secondary Principal,

Josie Rocca, Support Staff, and **Yvonne Anderson**, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant to Superintendent Forsyth-Sells.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: Co-Chair Kouroushis

THAT the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee approve the agenda of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of January 7, 2021 as presented.

CARRIED

4. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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

5. Approval of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting Minutes of November 5, 2020

Moved by: Rita Colling

THAT the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee approve the minutes of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of November 5, 2020 as presented.

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATION

C. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Faith Formation

- George Roussos thanked everyone for the opportunity to submit a faith formation proposal. George requested additional time to further develop his proposal to include showcasing Niagara Catholic staff and students for future consideration. George also stated that this is an important time for us to continue to support our faith and be role models for our children.
- Chair Rocca reported that at the November 30, 2020 subcommittee meeting, Advent activities for parents were discussed, however, due to the timeframe it was recommended to focus on Lenten activities.
- Chair Rocca, presented a Lenten proposal on behalf of the Faith Formation Subcommittee:
 - Fr. Paul MacNeil will create a brief video on the meaning of Lent, and the importance of Reconciliation.
 - Creation of Lenten Activities/Resources in consultation with Krista Wood, Board Chaplaincy Leader.
 - The Lenten video, activities and resources will be posted on the Board website and various social media links for parents to access throughout Lent.

All were in favour of the proposal. Chair Rocca will send an email to all members with an update.

2. Goals/Parent Engagement Events

- Nil Report

D. POLICY FEEDBACK

Chair Vernelli reported that there are no policies currently being vetted.

E. CHAIR/CO-CHAIR REPORTS

1. November 26, 2020-EDU Parent Involvement Committee Meeting Summary and PowerPoint Presentation

Chair Vernelli shared that on November 26, 2020, Co-Chair Kouroushis and herself, along with Director Cipriano and Superintendent Forsyth-Sells participated in the Ministry of Education virtual meeting with Parent Involvement Committees (PIC). The purpose of the meeting was to continue dialogue on the successes, promising practices, and challenges related to supporting parents and students since the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. A summary of the meeting and a PowerPoint presentation was provided to all NCPIC members for information.

F. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESIGNATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

1. Letter to Parents: The Virtual Return to School in January 2021: What Parents Need to Know
2. A Message from the Minister of Education to Ontario's Parents
 - Superintendent Forsyth-Sells provided and reviewed the Letter to Parents: The Virtual Return to School in January 2021-What Parents Need to Know and the Message from the Minister of Education to Ontario's Parents.
 - Superintendent Forsyth-Sells also addressed the Letter to Parents, dated January 7, 2021 from Director Cipriano, regarding the announcement made by Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. David Williams that all elementary students registered for in-person learning across southern Ontario will continue learning from home for two more weeks.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells asked if there any questions or clarification on any of the correspondence. No questions were forthcoming.

3. 2019-2020 Annual Reports for Catholic School Councils and the NCPIC
Superintendent Forsyth-Sells stated that in compliance with the *Education Act* and regulations, every Catholic School Council and the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee of the Board shall annually submit a written report on its activities, including fundraising activities to the Board. The NCPIC annual report was prepared by Chair, Darryl Nohara and Co-Chair, Chris Kouroushis on behalf of the NCPIC and was provided to all members for review.

The Annual Reports for Catholic School Councils and the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee 2019-2020 was presented for information at the November 10, 2020 Committee of the Whole Meeting. The full report is available for public review on the Board website, under Board, Meetings-Committee of the Whole, November 10, 2020.

4. NCPIC Financial Report

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported on the finances of the NCPIC for 2020-2021.

G. COMMUNITY REPORTS

Society of St. Vincent de Paul-Shelley Gilbert

Shelley reported that:

- St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Baskets were a success and the needs of all families were met.
- St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Stores are closed because of the lockdown, but volunteers are positive and looking forward to reopening when the lockdown is over.
- Josie Rocca was elected as the President, St. Vincent de Paul Society for the Niagara region at the last Society of St. Vincent de Paul meeting.
- Josie has been invited to join the St. Vincent de Paul executive for all of Ontario and looks forward to her participation.

H. SEAC REPORT

Co-Chair Kouroushis reported that at the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of January 6, 2021, Anna Racine was re-elected as the Chair and Madeline Zoelman accepted the position of Co-Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee. Goal setting is to take place to highlight profile, purpose and enhance opportunity for family awareness and involvement in SEAC through understanding its purpose and how to access support services in the community.

I. BISHOP/DIOCESAN REPORT-Fr. Paul MacNeil

Fr. Paul MacNeil provided and reviewed two documents:

1. Christmas Message 2020 from Bishop Bergie
Fr. Paul MacNeil encouraged members to read the Christmas message from Bishop Bergie as it is a positive and inspiring message.
2. Diocesan Protocols December 2020 January 2021
Fr. Paul MacNeil stated that the diocesan protocols are in place, as the number one priority of the diocese is the safety of all parishioners as we continue to come together as a community in a limited capacity. Parishioners are also reminded that the Bishop Bergie's dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays, and on Holy Days of Obligation granted on March 16, 2020 is ongoing. All parishioners are encouraged to view online/livestream/televised Masses.

J. STUDENT SENATE REPORT-Allan Buri

Allan Buri reported that:

- on February 4, 2021 the Elementary Lead Out Loud Conference will take place for all Elementary School Senators. Members of the Secondary Student Senate will be facilitating virtual breakout sessions with their respective family of schools' elementary student senators. These breakout sessions will follow a presentation by motivational speaker Nick Foley.
- on February 5, 2021, the Secondary Student Senate will hold a Mental Health Summit for students. Attendees will be taken through a mental health course on the platform EverFi where they will learn how to identify mental health issues, seek help and help others. The

summit will also include presentations from students, multiple Kahoots, and Trivia rounds. Attendees will receive 2 hours of community service.

- the mask sticker fundraisers are wrapping up and schools will send their proceeds to their respective local charities.

J. STAFF REPORTS-*Joe Tornabuono and Lou Stranges*

Elementary Principal, Tornabuono and Secondary Principal, Stranges provided elementary and secondary school updates for information.

K. TRUSTEE REPORTS-*Leanne Prince*

Trustee Prince wished everyone a Happy New Year!

Trustee Prince reported that:

- at the December 1, 2020 Organizational Board Meeting Trustee Larry Huibers (St. Catharines) was elected as Chair and Trustee Dan Moody (Niagara Falls/Niagara on the Lake) was elected as Vice-Chair.
- on December 21, 2020 and on January 7, 2021 the Ministry of Education made announcements regarding return to school. Originally, elementary students were to return January 11 to in class learning, but as we learned today it has been extended until January 25, 2021. Niagara Catholic staff, senior administration, students and parents are embracing the situation with kindness and patience as we navigate the new waters.
- during Advent we saw schools get creative in sharing their Christmas concerts, here is a link to Blessed Trinity's Christmas Concert <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWjuenB7yrU>.
- at the end of January Niagara Catholic will have our (virtual) Kindergarten Open House for children who will be 4 by December 3, 2021.
- our secondary schools will be hosting their Open Houses for Niagara Catholic grade 8 students throughout the next few weeks.
- currently the CEC is under some renovations to upgrade and update technology with the end goal to stream Board meetings increasing our transparency and making Board meetings more accessible to the broader public.

L. NEW BUSINESS/AGENDA ITEMS-DISCUSSION FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Jeremy Harb suggested that the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee send a letter of gratitude to Bishop Bergie to thank him for his bravery, spiritual guidance and continued support of our diocese by allowing churches to be available to parishioners, especially in this time of need. All were in favour. Jeremy Harb will draft a letter and forward it to the Chair and Co-Chair for review and approval.

M. NEXT MEETING: March 4, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

N. CLOSING PRAYER: Fr. Paul MacNeil led the closing prayer.

O. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Jeremy Harb

THAT the January 7, 2021, meeting of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee be adjourned.

CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.
