



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2021

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee held on **Wednesday, March 3, 2021**, at 6:30 pm Electronic Meeting in Compliance with Education Act Section 207 and Ontario Regulation 463/97 Section 5.1 (2) Public Access Phone Number: 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 with opening prayers.
- Chair Racine offered special intentions in memory of Kristin Baker who recently passed away. Kristin was an Applied Behaviour Analysis Lead for Niagara Catholic. She will be especially missed by the Student Support Department and the many families that she served at Niagara Catholic.
- Kelly Majka offered special intentions in memory of Carter Keith, a Special Education Grade 11 student from Notre Dame College who recently passed away.
- Carter will be especially missed by staff and students from Notre Dame College and Holy Name Catholic Elementary School.
- Niagara Catholic mourns the passing of Kristin and Carter.

2. Roll Call

Members	Affiliations	Yes	Excused
Harvey, Dorothy	Niagara Children's Centre	✓	
Huxley, Kelsey	Indigenous Community Member	✓	
Kelly, Tara	Pathstone Mental Health	✓	
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	✓	
Wilson, Wendy	Indigenous Community Member	✓	

Zoelman, Madeline	Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region	✓	
Burtnik, Kathy	• Trustee of the Board	✓	
Huibers, Larry	• Chair of the Board	✓	
Butera, Serena	• Student Senate Representative	✓	
Kerho, Chris	• Principal, Elementary	✓	
Majka, Kelly	• Vice-Principal, Secondary	✓	

Christalla (Chris) Kouroushis was an observer from NCPIC that evening. The following staff members were in attendance: **Gino Pizzoferrato**, Superintendent of Education, **Camillo Cipriano**, Director of Education, **Jim Di Gioia** - 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 Dorothy Harvey
- Seconded by Madeline Zoelman

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approves the Agenda of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **March 3, 2021**.

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 February 3, 2021**

- Moved by Karen Murphy
- Seconded by Pina Palombo

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approves the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **February 3, 2021** as presented.

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATIONS

1.1 Complaint Process – Director of Education Cipriano

From our Complaint Resolution Policy (800.3)

- A complaint of a Trustee will be referred directly to the Chair of the Board and heard in the In-Camera Meeting of the Board.
- A complaint involving a Trustee will be pursued under the Trustee Code of Conduct Policy (100.12).

From our Trustee Code of Conduct Policy (100.12)

- A Trustee or a supporter of Catholic education who is eligible to participate in the election of a Niagara Catholic trustee who has reasonable grounds to believe that a Trustee(s) has breached this Code of Conduct may bring the alleged breach, in writing,

- to the attention of the Board through the Chair of the Board, or the Vice-Chair, if the alleged breach is with the Chair of the Board or the Chair of the Board is unavailable.
- If a Trustee has reasonable grounds to believe that another Trustee has breached this Code of Conduct, he or she must bring the alleged breach forward as soon as reasonably possible. The Board may choose not to deal with an alleged breach should the alleged breach come to the Board's attention after: (a) one year after the incident to which the alleged breach relates; or (b) if there are a series of incidents, after one year after the last in the series. A Trustee may apply to the Board for an extension of this time limit, and the Board may grant such an extension if the Board is satisfied that the delay in bringing the alleged breach forward was incurred in good faith and no substantial prejudice will result to any person affected by the delay.
 - If an alleged breach is brought to the attention of the Board, the document setting out the breach together with any other materials will be provided to the Director of Education in the Director's role as Secretary to the Board. The Director of Education will place the matter in the Trustee and Director Only section of the next *In-Camera* Board Meeting.
 - At the *In-Camera* Board Meeting where the alleged breach of the Code of Conduct is presented, legal counsel to the Board will be present to advise the Board concerning legal matters related to relevant legislation and the Code of Conduct process as set out in the Code of Conduct. In compliance with Sections 198 and 283.1 of the *Education Act*, for the Board to meet, the Director of Education will be present as Secretary to the Board to take minutes. All other staff who attend meetings of the Board will be excused from the Trustee and the Director of the *In-Camera* portion of the meeting of the Board where the Code of Conduct complaint is presented.
 - At the *In-Camera* meeting of the Board at which the alleged breach is presented, the Board will direct Board legal counsel to oversee an independent investigation conducted by an external investigator as selected by Board legal counsel. The results of the external investigation will be presented to the Board by Board legal counsel and the external investigator upon completion. Based on the results of the external investigation, the Board will determine whether there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct.
 - If the Board determines that a Trustee has not breached the Code of Conduct, the Board may impose sanctions or consequences on the relevant individual(s), which includes a Trustee or Trustees, who have brought the complaint forward. The sanctions or consequences will be determined in consultation with Board legal counsel.
 - If the Board determines that a Trustee has breached the Code of Conduct, the Board may impose one or more of the following sanctions:
 - Censure of the Trustee.
 - Barring the Trustee from attending all or part of a meeting of the Board or a meeting of a committee of the Board.
 - Barring the Trustee from sitting on one or more committees of the Board, for the period of time specified by the Board.

1.2 Budget Update – Superintendent Vetrone

- Superintendent Vetrone shared a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee Members outlining the Special Education Budget.
- Superintendent Vetrone later opened the floor for a question period.
- Discussion followed.

2. Student Support Department – Jim Di Gioia, Coordinator of Student Support

- Jim DiGioia, Student Support Coordinator updated the Committee Members on the Special Education Plan. All Committee Members were provided with a copy of the SEAC Draft Special Education Plan (Parts 1 – 3).
- The Committee Members were provided with a link to submit feedback on Parts 1 – 3.
- All submitted feedback will be discussed at the next SEAC meeting.

C. AGENDA ITEMS

1. May Presentation – Dr. Sheila Bennett

- o Superintendent Pizzoferrato has confirmed with Dr. Bennett that she will present at May's SEAC Meeting.
- o Discussion followed regarding Dr. Bennett's topic and length of presentation.
- o Superintendent Pizzoferrato will provide an update at April's Meeting.

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 your name, phone number, address and affiliation with Niagara Catholic.
- *Anonymous or pseudonymous submissions will not be considered*
 - [Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy \(302.6.8\)](#)
 - [Student Expulsion Policy \(302.6.5\)](#)
 - [Employee Workplace Harassment Policy \(201.7\)](#)
 - [Employee Workplace Violence Policy \(201.11\)](#)
- Please submit your feedback to jennifer.pellegrini@ncdsb.com by **March 8, 2021 at 12:00 pm**.
- Jennifer Lanese, Recording Secretary uploaded the policies that were currently under review to the Microsoft Teams Chat.
- Chair of the Board, Huibers explained to the Committee Members the process of how policies are reviewed. He encouraged all Committee Members to submit feedback on those policies under review.
- The Committee Members were reminded of the due date to submit feedback to Jennifer Pellegrini.

3. SEAC Sub Committee Updates

- The Lead from each of the Sub Committees provided an update to the group.
- Discussion and questions followed.

D. AGENCY REPORTS

1. Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – Madeline Zoelman

- NIL Report

2. Niagara Children's Centre – Dorothy Harvey

- NIL Report

3. Indigenous Community Member – Kelsey Huxley

- *The Métis Nation of Ontario Post-Secondary Education Support Program*
 - MNO citizens can now apply to receive funding to access post-secondary education and reach their highest potential. The application period for 2021-2022 is now open and closes on **Friday, April 30th**. To apply, kindly click on the attached link:
<https://www.metisnation.org/programs-and-services/education-training/post-secondary-education-support-program/>.
- *The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Extra-Curricular Reimbursement Program*
 - Through this Program, the MNO supports Métis families with young children by having their child's extracurricular fees and/or extra-curricular equipment covered by the Métis Nation of Ontario. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - March Break Camps
 - Summer Camps
 - Early Learning Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Programs
 - Early Learning Arts (Music, Visual Arts, Dance, Drama) and Language courses
 - Sports and Skills development
 - Community Programs including Scouting and Girl Guides Virtual/Online programs
 - Additional information can be found at: <https://www.metisnation.org/programs-and-services/education-training/early-learning-and-child-care/enhanced-extra-curricular-reimbursement-program/>.
- 4. Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Karen Murphy
 - Just a reminder that the deadline to register for "Raise the Flag" is **Wednesday, March 10th**.
 - For additional information, please contact Dawn, Chapter Manager at **905-682-2776 x 201** or chaptermgr.niagara@autismontario.com.
 - World Autism Day is **Tuesday, April 6th** and Blue Shirt Day. Please support **World Autism Day** and wear a blue shirt on the 6th!
- 5. Down Syndrome Niagara – Pina Palombo
 - **Sunday, March 21st** is **World Down Syndrome Day**. Staff and students across Niagara Catholic will be observing World Down Syndrome Day on **Friday, March 19th** by participating in "Rock Your Socks".
- 6. Community Living Welland/Pelham – Kerry Thomas
 - NIL Report

7. Mainstream – Lorraine Smith

- Mainstream will be offering a virtual speaker series in **May 2021**.
- Information will be shared from the following community agencies.
 - o Developmental Services Ontario
 - o Contact Hamilton / Passport
 - o Literacy and Basic Skill Program
 - o Gateway
- The information sessions will be offered every **Wednesday** from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm during May.
- Please watch for a flyer for the Speaker Series to follow at a later date.

8. Community Living Port Colborne / Wainfleet – Rita Smith

- NIL Report

9. Pathstone Mental Health – Kelly Tara

- NIL Report

E. STAFF REPORTS

1. Elementary Principals – Chris Kerho

- NIL Report

2. Secondary Principals – Kelly Majka

- Kelly Majka share the following updates from our Secondary Schools:

Notre Dame College School

- o Our Notre Dame Special Education Classroom Teacher Laura Sparkman has passionately been working on developing a state-of-the-art NCVLE Classroom for her students and families and has also shared it with many of her colleagues across the other 7 Catholic Secondary Schools. When staff embraces what technology can offer, it certainly spills into the lives of the students and their families exponentially. Mrs. Sparkman has taken screenshots to capture what her NCVLE looks like.
- o The screenshots were shared with the Committee Members that evening.

Blessed Trinity

- o Since the Special Education Department at Blessed Trinity re-opened, they have been busy implementing a variety of programming for their students which include educational, physical fitness, and life skills goals. Specifically in this programming, they have implemented daily obstacle course activities in the gym where our students have the opportunity to perform various physical tasks on different forms of apparatus. Each morning they also provide virtual field trips for their students which include tours of Disneyworld. The parents and students at their school were so happy to have their children return in person!

Holy Cross

- The Holy Cross Special Education Class has been thoroughly enjoying their time together in Cohort C. They had a very successful lunch-making program that took place in their culinary kitchen. They used Boardmaker to create recipes and will be making cookbooks as gifts for their families.
- They also had been able to use the cosmetology class regularly. Each interested student had their own mannequin head and workstation. The students were learning to shampoo, brush, and style their mannequin's head. These experiences inspired students to consider future co-op placements in these areas.
- Fitness is a very important part of each day. They enjoyed the beautiful weather with daily walks and now have the small gym at their disposal to play games, dance, and use personalized equipment.
- The highlight of their program continues to be music therapy with Mendelt. Although the sessions were virtual, the impact was the same. They had Mendelt on the big screen in the library and both in-person and virtual learners took place. The joy was evident on the students' faces as they danced along and made requests for their favourite songs.

Virtual High School

- For their virtual social group, Mrs. Penny Macklem, the Educational Resource Teacher decided to introduce the "Wheel of Names". It is an application that will choose a random name based on a pre-populated list, so the teacher is not always the one picking the order of students for their turn to contribute. It is a fun visual experience for these students as they wait in anticipation for their name to come up on the screen as the "Winner".
- Penny also wanted to share the following success story. In September when she started teaching Virtual Special Education, she met a young man in grade 9. He was lovely, well-spoken, participated fully, but never wanted to be on camera. Granted, some students are just like that. As time went on, he opened up a little more and shared that he had a job. She was so happy to hear this. Along came Term 3 and the Special Education students were going back to be serviced at their home school. There was something about this young man that had her thinking he was way more capable than was described in his IEP and that she had not witnessed any of the 'behaviour' outlined on his IEP.
- She got in touch with the Special Education teacher at the home school and explained that this student should be entitled to receive a school credit for his progress/work and participation. Later, the teacher discussed this with the student's parent. Fast forward to today and this young man is sitting at 93% in Grade 11 Math and is going to attempt more credit courses in Semester 2. With the right supports in place this young man could achieve his Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato will be joining Mrs. Macklem's classroom tomorrow to observe and meet her students.

3. Superintendent of Education – Gino Pizzoferrato

- NIL Report

4. Student Support Department – Jim Di Gioia

- LEARNstyle is a software company that currently runs several online platforms Niagara Catholic school staff use regularly, such as the IEP Engine, the SEA-it Portal for managing SEA equipment purchases, and eLite, on which we recently launched our electronic Request for Support processes.
- Niagara Catholic recently initiated a partnership with LEARNstyle as they enter the development stage of a new platform they're calling **RISE**. RISE is best described as an all-in-one IEP solution tool that LEARNstyle hopes will be released widely within a year after initial beta testing is complete. As a partner, Niagara Catholic staff have been invited to participate in testing and offering feedback on various aspects of the program through a 5-15 minute per week commitment.
- LEARNstyle recently retired the IEP Engine platform, which means that they are continuing to support and run the service for School Boards who continue to use it, but we hope that as a development partner on RISE, we will be part of the first wave of School Boards who will migrate to the new system.

5. Director of Education – Camillo Cipriano

- Director of Education Cipriano thanked everyone for their input and feedback.

F. TRUSTEE REPORTS

Chair of the Board Huibers

- Chair of the Board, Huibers shared with the group that the Board and Trustees were not provided with any input or allowed to provide input to the change in the March Break schedule. Chair of the Board Huibers told the group that they learn about this change about 10 minutes before it was publicly announced by the Ministry of Education.
- He stressed to the group if this change has changed major stress relative to providing support to the families that the Committee Members support, he encouraged them to share that information with the Ministry. The Ministry should be made aware of the impact of their "simple decision" may not be so "simple" for those families.
- He also spoke about the online streaming process for the general public to observe Board meetings. Interested individuals can able to join in by Zoom and hopefully by next month, individuals can watch later this month, but by March, you can watch it live-streamed. Therefore individuals don't have to dedicate an entire evening but the availability of live streaming would allow greater participation and encourages participants to stay engaged actively.

Trustee Burtnik

- Trustee Burtnik thanked the Chair of the Board Huibers for his comments.
- She reminded the group of the upcoming Multi-Years Strategic Planning process that is upcoming. This process will ensure that the Board is supporting the direction and recommendations of the Committee Members.
- She thanked the group for being active servants for the students of Niagara Catholic. Specifically, students whose names that our Committee Members don't even know.
- She complimented the group's dedication, insight and willingness to support all of Niagara Catholic's students and concluded by saying that she was proud to be a member of SEAC.

STUDENT REPORT

- This past month, Student Senate and Student Councils across Niagara Catholic have participated in a variety of initiatives to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. This was done in a fun and unique way. As well, all Councils are preparing for their Elections and the appointment of the new Senators.
- Previously, the Senate had completed *Lead Out Loud*; an initiative for the Elementary Senate. This included Nick Foley as a guest speaker and a workshop period for the Senators to learn more about Inclusion in their communities and what they can do to encourage it in their own schools. This event was an overwhelming success and they received positive feedback from the participating Elementary Senators.
- As well, The Senate held Mental Health Morning, an event for secondary school students to participate and learn more about mental health through trivia, presentations and videos. There were over 200 participants and an 80% attendance average. Students who actively participated earned 2 Christian Community Service hours for their time. Many students enjoyed this event and it received positive feedback from the attendees and across the School Board.
- Overall the Senate is very pleased with the initiatives executed in this past year and the Senate is very excited for what is to come in the future.

G. NCPIC REPORT

- NIL Report

H. FUTURE MEETINGS / INFORMATION ITEMS

- Presentation to discuss the Multi-Year Strategic Planning Process will take place next month.

I. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND REFLECTION

- Chair Racine offered a moment of silence and reflection. She asked the Committee Members to keep Adele Filice in their prayers. She also offered reflection for the upcoming Easter season.
- The Committee Members exchanged Easter greetings.

J. NEXT MEETING

- **Wednesday, April 7, 2021 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.

K. ADJOURNMENT

- Moved by Madeline Zoelman
- Seconded by Kelsey Huxley

THAT the March 3, 2021 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee be adjourned.
CARRIED

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.