



NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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

MARCH 4, 2021

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee, held on Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells notified the committee members that the NCPIC Meeting of March 4, 2021 and future meetings of the NCPIC will be recorded.

Chair Vernelli called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Opening Prayer

Fr. Paul MacNeil led the opening prayer.

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	Society of St. Vincent de Paul	√		
Fr. Paul MacNeil	Bishop/Diocesan Representative	√		
Allan Buri	Secondary Student Senate Representative	√		
Trustees				
Dino Sicoli	Trustee	√		
Leanne Prince	Trustee	√		

Regrets: Todd Ulbinas and Lou Stranges.

The following staff were in attendance: **Camillo Cipriano**, Director of Education, **Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells**, Superintendent of Education, **Joe Tornabuono**, Elementary Principal, **Josie Rocca**, Support Staff, and **Yvonne Anderson**, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant to Superintendent Forsyth-Sells.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: Trustee Prince

THAT the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee approve the agenda of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of March 4, 2021 as presented.

CARRIED

4. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No disclosures of conflict of interest were declared with any items on the agenda.

5. Approval of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting Minutes of January 7, 2021

Moved by: Rita Colling

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

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATION

Camillo Cipriano, Director of Education provided background information on the creation of Vision 2020 that has acted as a road map guiding our system for past ten years. Niagara Catholic is currently preparing a consultation process to create a new Niagara Catholic Multi-Year Strategic Plan. Niagara Catholic will be hiring a consultant to assist the Board and the Multi-Year Strategic Planning Committee navigate the consulting process, and the process of gathering external and internal data (demographics, real estate and enrolment trends in our communities, EQAO data, and report card data in our schools). The Multi-Year Strategic Planning Committee is comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders; however, it is important that all stakeholders have a voice in the new direction of Niagara Catholic. All stakeholders will be given the opportunity to provide feedback through a variety of platforms and vetting processes. The new Niagara Catholic Multi-Year Strategic Plan will be in place no later than fall of 2021. A question and answer period followed.

C. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Faith Formation

Chair Rocca reported that the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Lenten video is posted on Board website under the Virtual Chapel and on social media. Chair Rocca, thanked Fr. Paul MacNeil, Chair Vernelli, Co-Chair Kouroushis, Superintendent Forsyth-Sells, Communications' Officer Jennifer Pellegrini and all NCPIC members for their support of the video.

2. Goals/Parent Engagement Events

- Nil Report

D. POLICY FEEDBACK

Chair Vernelli requested feedback on policies currently being vetted.

- Superintendent Forsyth-Sells provided a brief background on the policies being vetted.
- Director Cipriano provided further information on the purpose of the Board By-Laws Policy.

1. [Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy \(302.6.8\)](#)
2. [Student Expulsion Policy \(302.6.5\)](#)
3. [Employee Workplace Harassment Policy \(201.7\)](#)
4. [Employee Workplace Violence Policy \(201.11\)](#)

Additional feedback is to be sent to Yvonne Anderson at yvonne.anderson@ncdsb.com, by Friday, March 5, 2021 to be submitted on behalf of the NCPIC or no later than 12 p.m. on Monday, March 8, 2021 to Jennifer Pellegrini at jennifer.pellegrini@ncdsb.com, as an individual submission.

1. [Board By-Law Policy \(100.1\)](#)
2. [Occupational Health and Safety Policy \(201.6\)](#)
3. [Student Exclusion From School or Class Policy \(NEW\)](#)

Additional feedback is to be sent to Yvonne Anderson at yvonne.anderson@ncdsb.com, by Monday, March 29, 2021 to be submitted on behalf of the NCPIC or, no later than 12 p.m. on Wednesday, March 31, 2021 to Jennifer Pellegrini at jennifer.pellegrini@ncdsb.com, as an individual submission.

- Chair Vernelli made a suggestion to reinstate a policy review committee and will reach to members to set up a virtual meeting.

E. CHAIR/CO-CHAIR REPORTS

1. February 24, 2021-EDU Parent Involvement Committee Meeting

Chair Vernelli shared that she was pleased to participate along with Director Cipriano and Superintendent Forsyth-Sells in the Ministry of Education virtual meeting with Parent Involvement Committees (PIC) Chairs, Co-Chairs and Board Leads from across Ontario on February 24, 2021. Parent Involvement Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs and Board Leads were given the opportunity to discuss and share insights and experiences of using PRO Grants. Apprenticeship Youth Advisors from the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development also made a presentation on apprenticeships and skilled trades. Thoughts and ideas were shared on how to address the stigma associated with careers in skilled trades and how to encourage young students to participate in apprenticeships and skilled trade opportunities.

2. Chair Vernelli also reported that she had the pleasure of sitting on the Niagara Catholic Board Calendar Committee along with Superintendent Forsyth-Sells and that it was very interesting to see how the calendar all comes together.

Follow-Up

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that Niagara Catholic also has an excellent program called Specialist High Skilled Majors, which currently provides 42 programs for students to explore. Superintendent Forsyth-Sells will contact the Ministry and Board personnel to request a virtual presentation for NCPIC and CSC regarding skilled trades.

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

1. Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that the 2019-2020 Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants were used to support Niagara Catholic families in need through the distribution of grocery cards.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells requested proposals for expending the 2020-2021 Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant. The following suggestions were received:

1. Continue to support Niagara Catholic families in need through the distribution of grocery gift cards.
2. Donate to the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education due to the cancellation of fundraising events as a result of COVID-19.
3. Provide the schools with funding to purchase spirit wear for students to enhance their connection to the school.
4. Support kindergarten play areas or student activity kits for use at home.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells thanked the members for their suggestions and stated that the Ministry provides guidelines and that she will research the parameters on how the funds may be spent and follow-up with the Chair Vernelli and Co-Chair Kouroushis.

There was consensus to support the purchase and distribution of grocery gift cards with an accompanying letter acknowledging the support of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee.

2. 2021-2022 School Year Calendar

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells thanked the NCPIC members for their feedback on the proposed Niagara Catholic 2021-2022 School Year Calendar. Once approval has been received from the Ministry of Education, the 2021-2022 School Year Calendar will be shared at the Board level and with all parents and guardians.

3. Equity Committee-Parent Representative

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that Niagara Catholic is establishing an Equity Committee through an invitation process in order to gain representation from all stakeholder groups. Superintendent Forsyth-Sells provided background information and the purpose of the committee. Interested members are to email Superintendent Forsyth-Sells with their intent, no later than Monday, March 8, 2021.

4. Niagara Catholic Award of Distinction/Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education Gala

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported for clarification that the Niagara Catholic Award of Distinction and the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education Gala have been cancelled for the 2020-2021 school year.

5. Asymptomatic Testing in Our Schools

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells provided information on the Ministry initiative of asymptomatic testing. All school boards are responsible for asymptomatic testing and communication will be sent to all families. This is voluntary testing provided by a third party for our students and staff.

6. 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 Gilbert reported that:

- all St. Vincent de Paul thrift stores are open and accepting donations.
- the summer camp program in Chatham has been cancelled this summer due to renovations.
- the North of 60 program committee had a meeting with Fr. Daniel to discuss the non-perishable food items needed to support his after school program. As the government has provided support to the communities this year, the sea container designated to support Fr. Daniel's afterschool program.

H. SEAC REPORT-Co-Chair Kouroushis

On behalf of SEAC, Co-Chair Kouroushis reported that:

- at the SEAC Meeting of March 6, 2021, Giancarlo Vetrone, Superintendent of Business and Financial Service presented on the Special Education funding model as it applies to Niagara Catholic.
- SEAC is reviewing the brochure provided by Niagara Catholic for families to make it vibrant and informative.
- SEAC is working through a draft version of a survey to measure the degree of implementation of the Niagara Catholic Special Education Plan.

I. BISHOP/DIOCESAN REPORT-Fr. Paul MacNeil

Fr. Paul MacNeil reported that:

- parishes are now open to 30% capacity. Churches remained open from December 26 to February 28 under very restricted capacity limitations - 10 people in total as the safety of the parish communities is the highest priority in the Diocese.
- a virtual Forty Days for Life campaign is being held in Niagara during Lent 2021. Every day, coordinator Annette Loeffen will send an email with prayer intentions, Scripture passages, pictures and encouragement to pray and fast for an end to abortion and euthanasia. To take part, email Annette: loeffenlife@hotmail.com.
- From the Bishop's letter concerning vaccines: "In summary, I wish to state that from a moral perspective, if certain conditions are met, a Catholic can receive this COVID-19 vaccine in good conscience." Our Diocesan Directives Document helps to explain those conditions as clearly as possible.
- information concerning the COVID-19 vaccines can be found on the Diocesan Website www.saintcd.com. The resource is entitled, "Directives Concerning COVID-19 Vaccines." This brief two-page document summarizes the essential criteria for reflection on this issue, and I hope that you will find it helpful. It also contains links to other Church documents that you should find useful. The Parish Catholic School Council liaison letter: our parish liaisons

sent out a letter to their school councils with some great Lenten resources - this is done every month. A sample will be shared with the committee.

J. STUDENT SENATE REPORT-Allan Buri

Allan Buri reported that:

- on February 4, 2021, Niagara Catholic hosted a Virtual Lead Out Loud Conference for elementary school senators. Guest speaker Nick Foley opened with an entertaining and thought-provoking presentation titled “How Do You Want to Be Remembered?” Students were given the opportunity to discuss their thoughts about his message with their Family of Schools councils in breakout sessions led by secondary student senators. The event was a great success, with over one hundred students in attendance.
- on February 5, 2021, the secondary student senate held their first ever Mental Health Summit. There was a fantastic turnout, with nearly 300 students tuning in from across Niagara! Important information regarding mental health was shared via short videos made by students and four rounds of fun, educational Kahoots! Students also had the chance to direct any questions to the Board Mental Health Lead. Kahoot winners received a prize and all attendees received two hours of community service.
- applications for 2021-2022 community representatives are available for Gr. 9-11 students who are interested in representing their community on the Secondary Senate. The deadline to apply is April 9, 2021.

K. STAFF REPORTS-Joe Tornabuono and Lou Stranges

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

L. TRUSTEE REPORTS-Leanne Prince

Trustee Sicoli reported that:

- Jennifer Pellegrini, Communications’ Officer provided an excellent presentation to the Board on Niagara Catholic 2021 Recruitment Campaign. Niagara Catholic received 1024 online registrations that is an increase of 500 from 2019 and 303 from 2020. Secondary schools received funding to create their own marketing to support open houses through various social media platforms.

Director Cipriano was pleased to report that enrolment has increased in all grades across the Board for 2021-2022 due to a variety of reasons including school reputation, social media platforms, marketing and demographics.

Trustee Prince reported that:

- in early February, the Ministry of Education announced that March Break was being postponed until April 2021.
- this decision was not made by Niagara Catholic but by the Province however, Niagara Catholic understands the challenges that may be posed to some families, including staff, but are thankful for everyone's support towards each other as we continue on our journey.
- as Director Cipriano mentioned, Niagara Catholic is starting our new Multi-Year Strategic and the Board is looking forward to receiving feedback from all stakeholders to chart the course for the future.

- technology updates have been completed at the Catholic Education Centre and the Board is hoping to livestream meetings on YouTube for the public to view, not just dial in and listen.
- on behalf of Chair Huibers, Vice-Chair Moody and all the trustees, we wish you and your families a blessed Easter.

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

- No items were brought forward.

N. NEXT MEETING: May 6, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

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

P. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Shonna Daly

THAT the March 4, 2021, meeting of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee be adjourned.

CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.
