



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 2021

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee held on **Wednesday, June 2, 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 6:32 pm.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Land Acknowledgement

- Superintendent Pizzoferrato read the Land Acknowledgement.

2. Opening Prayer

- Chair Racine led with an opening prayer.

3. 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	✓	
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, **David O'Rourke**, Coordinator of Student Support, **Vincent Mancuso**, Behaviour Resource Teacher, and **Jennifer Lanese**, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant to Superintendent Pizzoferrato.

4. **Approval of the Agenda**

- Moved by Madeline Zoelman
- Seconded by Serena Butera

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approves the Agenda of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **June 2, 2021.**

CARRIED

5. **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

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

6. **Approval of Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee of May 5, 2021.**

- Moved by Serena Butera
- Seconded by Madeline Zoelman

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approves the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **May 5, 2021** as presented.

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATIONS

1. **Continuing Education Programs – Robert Di Persio**

- Robert Di Persio shared a PowerPoint presentation showcasing Niagara Catholic's Continuing Education Programs which includes:
 - Obtaining a Secondary School Diploma
 - Adult Day School
 - Online Learning
 - Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students (PLAR)
 - Multi-Language Programs
 - English as a Second Language
 - International and Indigenous Languages for Elementary students
 - Language instructions for new individuals to Canada (LINC)
 - School to Work Programs
 - Cooperative Education
 - Personal Support Worker
 - Specialized Language Training Program
 - Teach English as a Second Language (TESOL)
 - Student Support Programs
 - Academic and Core Skills
 - Literacy and Numeracy Programs

- Niagara Catholic has many convenient locations to serve our community:
 - St John Learning Centre, located at 145 Niagara Street, St Catharines, ON (905-682-3360)
 - St Ann Learning Centre located at 5895 North Street, Niagara Falls, ON (905-354-3531)
 - Father Fogarty Learning Centre located at 269 Thorold Road W., Welland, ON (905-734-4495)
 - St John South Learning Centre located at 54 Jarvis Street, Fort Erie, ON (905-991-8951)
 - eLearning Centre (905-682-3360)
- For more information, please visit our website: www.niagaracontinuingeducation.ca or call toll-free at 1-866-727-8401.

2. **Learning Strategies Classes – Susy Walsh**

- Susy Walsh shared with the group the focus of the Learning Strategies Social Skills Class (LSSSC):
 - Does the existing Learning Strategies Social Skills class framework serve our greatest system-wide?
- The Committee members are comprised of the following Niagara Catholic staff members: a Student Support Coordinator, 2 Behaviour Resource Teachers, LSSSC Classroom Teachers, the LSSSC School Principals, the Home School Principals and/or the Educational Resource Teachers, the Mental Health Lead, and the Behaviour Analyst (ABA).
- The following were discussed during the Open Forum discussions:
 - What would be the ideal profile of a candidate for a LSSSC placement? Does this profile meet the greatest needs in our system?
 - What would an effective transition plan include for students entering and leaving a LSSSC placement, and how would the integration process fit into it?
 - What is the role of the home school? What common practices and supports are needed for the home school throughout the transition process?
 - What should Student Support and/or other board-level support look like in order to achieve wrap-around services that support mental health and well-being for all stakeholders?
 - What staff training and professional development would be of greatest benefit? (i.e., ABA, crisis intervention, trauma training).

3. **ABA Presentation – Julia Nemcko**

- Julia Nemcko, Board Certified Behaviour Analyst provided a summary of Niagara Catholic's ABA Team.
- She described how the team structure has shifted over the past year. We now have a lead Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA), 3 Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Leads (an increase from 2 last year), 8 ABA Facilitators (an increase from 6 last year).
- The principles of ABA align directly with the mission, vision and values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) and the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations (OCSGE) in that interfering behaviours in student learning ultimately interfere with a child's ability to build meaningful relationships with themselves, with others and with God.

- ABA is a targeted intervention that has the potential to leverage equity, inclusion and full accessibility for all learners, especially our most vulnerable learners, so that every student may assume their rightful position as a faith-filled contributor and valued member of a Catholic Learning Community.
- This vision requires:
 - Seeing behaviour and behaviour intervention through the lens of our faith and Christ's eyes.
 - Adopting an ABA for all lens where ABA is embedded in all teaching and learning practices to bring dignity to all.
 - An interdisciplinary approach where clinical and educational excellence meets to create new and innovative spaces for student learning, student dignity and student wellness.

Direct Student Support Data

- 46 schools have had involvement (81%) of schools; 275 students have accessed ABA service; **Number of Contacts** 340 (Direct and indirect observations, Behaviour Skills Training (BST) - directly working with staff in classrooms through skill acquisition or behaviour reduction programs; **Number of Training:** 248.

Support for Students During COVID-19

- We continue to provide in-person support during school closures for students with complex Special Education needs utilizing our Targeted ABA Intervention (TABAI) model.
- In-Person-Direct Student Supports:
 - Tier 1 Classwide Supports-Superflex Program
 - Peer Awareness; Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS) Curriculum.
- Virtual Direct Student Supports:
 - Summer camps
 - After-school programs
 - Social Skill programs

Support for Staff During COVID-19

- Our team continues to provide in-person staff support through TABAI and Behaviour Skills Training (BST). Virtual ABA Staff Supports: conducting virtual training including Behaviour Management Systems (BMS); PD day workshops to EAs, CYWs, ECEs, elementary and secondary teachers, and principals and vice-principals; Conducting virtual case conferences and school meetings/consultations; conducting virtual observations; booster sessions on student programming.

Support for Families During COVID-19

- ABA services are student-focused in collaboration with families and/or caregivers. Families and/or caregivers benefit from our support in navigating services within NCDSB and outside community agencies as ongoing shifts and pivots occur.

- Ongoing supports include:
 - Virtual consultation through case conferences
 - Skill development programs
 - Tip Sheets
 - Parent Workshops

4. **Multi-Year Strategic Plan – Maria Sanchez-Keane**

- All the Committee Members were required to join the Zoom Meeting created by Maria.
- During the presentation, the group anonymously answered questions and provided feedback on various Board related topics.
- All Committee Members participated.
- The data will be collected as part of the MYSP process.

C. AGENDA

1. **Other Related Items**

1.1 **Annual Review of the Special Education Plan**

- David O'Rourke summarized the process of the final stages of the Special Education Plan.
- He thanked the Committee Members for providing their feedback.
- The Ministry of Education requires district School Boards to publicly make available a comprehensive report regarding the current special education programs and services of the Board. Building Bridges to Services 2020 and Beyond is our Board's current version of the Ministry of Education mandated Special Education Plan that includes the components that are defined in Special Education in Ontario Kindergarten to Grade 12 Policy and Resource Guide 2017 as well as the protocols established in Policy and Program Memorandum 149.
- In compliance with Regulation 464/97, Student Support staff consults with the Niagara Catholic's Special Education Advisory Committee in the preparation and update of the Special Education Plan.
- A checklist that notes the plan's parts, updated sections and the URL leading to the Special Education Plan on our Board's website is annually completed and submitted to the London Regional Education Office by **July 30, 2021**. The 2021 Special Education Plan can be accessed from the Board's website. Select <Programs>, Select <Special Education>, Select <Special Education Plan> or by clicking on the direct link: [Special Education Plan](#).

MOTION

Moved by Dorothy Harvey

Seconded by Madeline Zoelman

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the revisions to the Provisions of Special Education Programs and Services to be included in the Special Education Plan, Building Bridges and Services 2021 and Beyond, as presented.

CARRIED

MOTION

Moved by Dorothy Harvey

Seconded by Madeline Zoelman

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee forwards the Special Education Plan, Building Bridges and Services 2021 and Beyond, to the Committee of the Whole for their consideration and approval.

CARRIED

1.2 Ministry Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) Community Collaboration Forms – Summary

- The due date for the submission of the completed MACSE forms was on **Friday, May 21, 2021.**
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato anonymously thanked those Committee Members who submitted a MACSE form.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato and the Student Support Coordinators collated the submitted forms into 1 document.
- The collaborated feedback was emailed to Peggy Blair of the HWDSB on May 25, 2021.

1.3 Letter to SEAC Chair from Renfrew County CDSB in support of Bill 172.

- A copy of the letter was emailed to the Committee Members and it was also uploaded to the Chat before the start of the meeting.
- Chair Racine provided a summary of the letter.
- Discussion followed.
- It was decided that the letter would be for information only and we will revisit it next September.

2. Policy 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.

3. SEAC Sub Committees Update

- a) The Communication Sub-Committee Members
 - No new information was shared. Superintendent Pizzoferrato will work with the provided template provided by the Sub-Committee. This will get re-visited in September.
- b) The Survey Sub-Committee
 - There was not any additional information shared. The Survey Sub-Committee members were waiting for feedback from the Student Support staff.
 - Jennifer Lanese emailed some last-minute feedback to Chair Racine and Co-Chair Zoelman during the meeting.
 - Superintendent Pizzoferrato requested to meet with the Survey Sub-Committee members after the meeting to discuss the submitted feedback.
- c) No update from the Policy Report Sub-Committee.
- d) No update from the Ministry Report Sub-Committee.

E. AGENCY REPORTS

1. Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – Madeline Zoelman

- The LDANR was given the go-ahead to run their in-person SLAM Summer Camp which is currently full. They are offering a Summer Reading Rocks session which has 4 different time slots to choose from that will take place over 6 weeks this summer. Their Fall program applications are open on their website which will be offered online again. They are also working on a partnership with Niagara Catholic to offer 60 spots of their S.O.A.R. Secondary Transition Program and 20 spots of their S.O.A.R. Post-Secondary Transition program running in the morning or afternoon from August 4th to August 13th. For more information, please visit their website: www.ldaniagara.org.

2. Niagara Children's Centre – Dorothy Harvey

- Dorothy Harvey shared that the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services has increased funding which will increase access to services for students and School Boards. This is an acknowledgment that this is an underfunded program and a valued program that was inherited from the Ministry of Health. More information to follow in September on the amount of additional funding.
- She also spoke about a program in collaboration with Bethesda for an Ontario Autism program. It is an entry to school program for children diagnosed with autism and it is a 6 month targeted program.
- For more information about these programs, please visit their website: <https://niagarachildrenscentre.com>.

3. Indigenous Community Member – Kelsey Huxley

Findings of 215 Indigenous Children Buried at Kamloops Residential School:

- Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation leaders have confirmed the bodies of 215 children were recently found buried in unmarked graves at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia. Please see the statement from the Métis Nation of Ontario.
- <https://www.metisnation.org/news/statement-from-mno-on-recent-revelations-from-kamloops-indian-residential-school/>

Bear on Wood Slab Art Workshop:

- The Niagara Region Métis Council is hosting a Metis Community Virtual Art Circle Event. The event is open to Métis citizens living in Niagara 10 years of age and up. The event will take place through zoom on **Sunday, June 27th from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon**, please contact Kelsey Huxley at Kelsey_562@hotmail.com to register.

STEP Resource Centre St. Catharines:

- The STEP Youth Resource Centre supports provides FREE services for Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth ages 14-24. Since 2019 at the inception of the STEP center, they have helped youth connect with community resources that meet the basic needs of youth: food, housing, clothing and employment. They also provide a variety of programming and mental health and wellness support. For more information, please call **289-362-4404** or you can email them at stepstgeorges@gmail.com.

4. Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Karen Murphy

- It has been a crazy year and all of their summer camps are taking place virtually. They are hopeful to resume to in-person next year.

5. Down Syndrome Niagara – Pina Palombo

- They are trying to coordinate with their Down Syndrome group a summer virtual picnic. The details are still being finalized.

6. Community Living Welland/Pelham – Kerry Thomas

- They just wrapped up Community Living month across the province of Ontario. Due to COVID-19, it was celebrated differently this year. This year they lit up Welland Bridge 13 in blue and green at the beginning of May.
- They are very excited to be partnering with the City of Welland to offer an inclusive camp again this summer.

7. Mainstream – Lorraine Smith

- NIL Report

8. Community Living Port Colborne / Wainfleet – Rita Smith

- NIL Report

9. Pathstone Mental Health – Bill Helmeczi

- Bill Helmeczi emailed his regrets to Jennifer Lanese before the meeting. In his email message to Jennifer Lanese, he stated that he was resigning from the Special Education Advisory Committee after 12 years of service.
- Jennifer Lanese asked Chair Racine to share that information with the group during the meeting.
- Chair Racine acknowledged Bill's resignation and thanked Bill for his dedication and commitment to the Special Education Advisory Committee.
- Once a new nomination is appointed by Pathstone Mental Health to sit on the Special Education Advisory Committee, the members will be notified.

F. STAFF REPORTS

1. Elementary Principals – Chris Kerho

- NIL Report

2. Secondary Principals – Kelly Majka

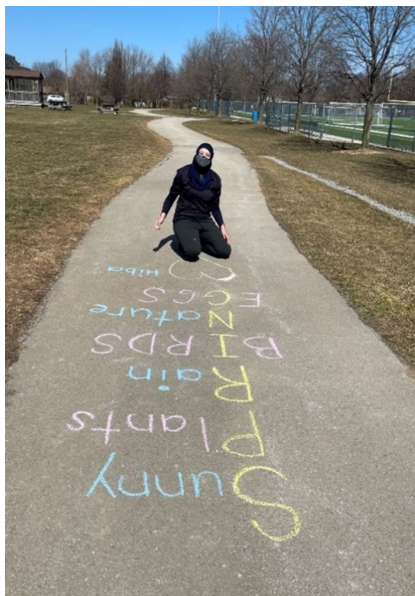
- Kelly Majka shared some good news from our Secondary Schools.

Saint Paul Catholic High School, Niagara Falls

- The Saint Paul Special Education class has had a busy few months. They have celebrated **Pink Shirt Day**, **Rock your Socks for World Down Syndrome Day**, and **Raise the Flag for World Autism**. Drew Jakobsons, a Saint Paul CHS student put together an amazing video encouraging the Saint Paul students to wear brightly coloured socks for World Down Syndrome Day. The video was played in each classroom and shared on the Saint Paul Instagram feed. The Special Education class, both in-person and virtual, tie-dyed socks for the event. The students celebrated Raise the

Flag for Autism on **Tuesday, April 6**. A flag was raised outside of Saint Paul Catholic High School and the student made and decorated their flags.

- The students also showed their creative side by decorating eggs for Easter! Some of the featured eggs were minions, ninja turtles, and emojis.
- On the first Monday of spring, the student wrote an acrostic poem about spring. After the poems were finished, the students wrote their poems on the track with sidewalk chalk to spread spring vibes.
- The Saint Paul Special Education department is participating in the Virtual Torch Run for Special Olympics. They are walking 34 km over 34 days to raise funds for Special Olympics Ontario. If anyone would like to donate, here is the link for our donation page:
- <https://give.specialolympicsontario.com/torchrun/campaigns/saint-paul-patriots/>.



Lakeshore Catholic, Port Colborne

- Former Denis Morris CHS student Josh Kerton, will age out of their program this June.
- This last term he will begin working towards his 30th credit to complete his OSSD!
- Lauren Patterson has been accepted to the Niagara College CICE program and she will enroll for school in September.

3. Superintendent of Education – Gino Pizzoferrato

- Superintendent Pizzoferrato shared with the group that he had an opportunity to attend the “Social Hour” hosted by Penny Macklem, our Secondary Special Education Teacher. On that particular day, it was their weekly “Joke Day” when Superintendent Pizzoferrato attended and upon his arrival, the room became “silent” because they saw Superintendent Pizzoferrato as a “stranger”.
- He shared how Penny helped make the students feel more comfortable having another person joining their “Joke Day”. He complimented how well Penny has worked with these students this past year. Superintendent Pizzoferrato left the “Social Hour” and promised to return another day, unannounced. He hopes that these students will no longer see him as “stranger”.
- He thanked the Committee Members for their participation and for representing their agencies on the Special Education Advisory Committee. He acknowledged the many initiatives that the Committee Members have organized this School Year. He also thanked the group for their tireless commitment and dedication for our students.
- He is looking forward to meeting the group in-person next year. Hopefully, we will resume in-person meetings during School Year 2021-2022.
- He concluded by wishing everyone a safe and healthy summer.

4. Student Support Coordinator – David O’Rourke

- David O’Rourke, Student Support Coordinator provided an update to the group.

Michael Jacques Classroom Presentations

- A following up on a very successful set of presentations to Niagara Catholic staff in **February 2021**, Michael made himself available for speaking engagements to individual classrooms if requested by school principals. The NCDSB entered into a book buying agreement where the Board would purchase 1 book for each classroom that received a presentation. Schools were asked to match that contribution as well. As of last week, 65 books were ordered by the Student Support Department which emphasizes the relevance of Michael’s message of positivity and inclusion. We are blessed to have the unwavering support of Michael Jacques at Niagara Catholic.

Lexia Reading Program Software

- Student Support is pleased to announce the purchase of over 550 licenses for the Lexia reading program. Lexia is a research-based, individualized program that gives educators more tools to help specific students develop their literacy. These licenses will be applied throughout the system next School Year to those students who have demonstrated the need for this type of intervention.

Summer Camps

- The Student Support Department is pleased to announce several plans and partnerships with local agencies to help students with various needs remain engaged in their learning and assist with transition planning for September 2021. Internally, the ABA Team will be expanding their summer camp opportunities for students with ASD from 15 last year to 30 students this summer. In addition, 10 spaces for online coding camps offered through LEARNstyle software have been secured. Niagara Catholic will once again partner with Bethesda to offer a transition to secondary school program for students with ASD. Finally, a partnership with LDANR is being formed to offer additional literacy, numeracy and transition programs for students.

5. Director of Education – Camillo Cipriano

- Director of Education Cipriano updated the group on the Opening Plan for September.
- He told the group that all elementary parents have been shared the Opening Plan for September.
- The Board will offer a Virtual School for those interested families.
- The Board is hopeful that the enrolment at the Virtual School will be significantly lower in September than it is currently for School Year 2020-2021.
- Parents should feel confident that our schools are safe for students and staff.
- The current plan is ever-changing and it will change as directives from Public Health and the Ministry of Education change.
- The Board will be sharing the Opening Plan with secondary parents next week.
- The Board is looking at a hybrid module.
- He concluded by wishing everyone a safe and healthy summer.

G. TRUSTEE REPORTS

- Trustee Burtnik also acknowledged how quickly the School Year has gone by. She emphasized that it has been a busy year for the Board and the Board Trustees.
- She also complimented the support, love and understanding that the group has expressed to our students this past School Year.
- She referred to the group as “influencers” and that she was proud to sit on the Special Education Advisory Committee along with this dedicated group.
- She shared that the Board has now implemented the reciting of the **Land Acknowledgment** at the start of all meetings/functions and in all of our schools.
- Each school will be provided with a wooden plaque that was made by the students at the Launch Centre. The purpose of the plaque is to recognize our past and to not repeat the atrocities and the unkindness.
- The Board has put forth a motion to fly the **Rainbow Flag** for the first week in June. They will be a full consultation between now and June 2022.
- Two great motions have been recently forwarded by Trustee Prince, specifically a poverty reduction for female students accessing menstrual products and the single-use of plastic in all of our school cafeterias. The later motion was originally suggested by our Student Senate and brought forth by Trustee Prince to the Board. Both motions have been approved by the Board.
- They have been discussing the Opening Plan for September as it is forever changing.
- She concluded by thanking the group for their commitment and dedication this year and wished them a restful summer break.

H. STUDENT REPORT

- This month, the Student Senate has been transitioning for the new school year. They recently just elected their new Student Trustee, Steffen Zylstra. As well as their new community representatives and evaluating recipients for our Student Senate Scholarship.
- Similarly, Student Councils across the board are transitioning with new executives and wrapping up the school year with awesome activities! They are looking forward to the summer break, and are hopeful for a full-time return to in-person learning in September!
- Serena concluded that she has enjoyed being the Student Senate representative on the Special Education Advisory Committee and is hopeful to be able to return as the representative for School Year 2021-2022.

I. NCPIC REPORT

- NIL Report

J. FUTURE MEETINGS / INFORMATION ITEMS

- The Committee Members were reminded of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meetings for School Year 2021-2022. All Meetings have been scheduled for the first Wednesday of each month (i.e., September 2021 to June 2022) except for September and March. September's meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 8, 2021 because of Labour Day and March's meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 9, 2021 because of Ash Wednesday. All Committee Members will be reminded again of the meeting dates during School Year 2021-2022.

K. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND REFLECTION

- Chair Racine offered a moment of silence and reflection.

L. NEXT MEETING

- The next meeting is Wednesday, September 8, 2021 at 6:30 pm (format to be confirmed in September).

M. ADJOURNMENT

- Moved by Serena Butera
- Seconded by Karen Murphy

THAT the **June 2, 2021** meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee be adjourned.
CARRIED

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

In closing, Superintendent Pizzoferrato thanked all members of the Special Education Advisory Committee for their hard work, continued support and representation of behalf of their individual community agencies and for building strong relationships within the Niagara Catholic District School Board. He wished everyone a blessed and restful summer.