



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee held on **Wednesday, September 8, 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

Co-Chair Zoelman called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. **Land Acknowledgement**
 - Co-Chair Zoelman read the Land Acknowledgement.

2. **Opening Prayer**
 - Co-Chair Zoelman led with an opening prayer.

3. **Roll Call**

Members	Affiliations	Yes	Excused
Harvey, Dorothy	Niagara Children's Centre		✓
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	✓	
Zoelman, Madeline	Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region	✓	
Burtnik, Kathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Trustee of the Board</i> 	✓	
Huibers, Larry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chair of the Board</i> 		✓
Butera, Serena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Student Senate Representative</i> 	✓	
Filice, Adele	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Principal. Secondary</i> 	✓	
Kerho, Chris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Principal, Elementary</i> 	✓	✓

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, **Danny Giancola**, Coordinator of Student Support **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 Karen Murphy
- Seconded by Lorraine Smith

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approves the Agenda of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **September 8, 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 June 2, 2021**

- Moved by Karen Murphy
- Seconded by Serena Butera

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

CARRIED

B. AGENDA ITEMS

1. **SEAC Meeting Procedures – Board By-Laws Policy, Policy No. 100.1**

- Superintendent Pizzoferrato provided a summary of Board By-Laws Policy, Policy No. 100.1 and reminded the Committee Members of the etiquette of our meetings and that we would be following Robert's rules.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato also encouraged the Committee Members to appoint an alternate representative from their Agency to fill their vacancy when or if they are unable to attend a meeting to ensure that we meet quorum at every meeting.

2. **Committee Membership**

- Superintendent Pizzoferrato then directed the Members to the Ministry of Education's website: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/seac/members.html.
- He explained that this site will explain SEAC Membership and its components (see below):
 - One representative and one alternate from up to twelve local associations
 - One or two trustees and each having one alternate in the event of an absence
 - Up to two First Nations representatives
 - One or two members at large and two alternates (who are not members of a local association nor members of the board)
- Presently, we have some vacancies for SEAC Members and, provided the appointed individual meets

the membership criteria, (see below), we encourage them to join SEAC:

- Must be 18 years old
- Must be a Canadian Citizen
- Must be qualified to vote for members of the Board
- Must be resident of the Niagara Catholic's jurisdiction

3. **Other Related Items**

3.1 **A Review of the Goals and Visions for School Year 2021-2022**

- Co-Chair Zoelman read the Goals and Visions to the Committee Members.
- Jennifer Lanese uploaded a copy of the Goals and Visions to the Chat.

3.2 **Annual Review, Special Education Plan – Building Bridges to Services 2021 and Beyond**

- Jim Di Gioia thanked the Committee Members for all of their feedback on updating last School Year's Special Education Plan. He told the group that we will be working through a similar process this School Year.
- 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](#).

4. **Policy Review**

- In keeping with Niagara Catholic's commitment to openness and transparency, the Board has established an extensive vetting process for its Governance Policies. When Policies and Administrative Guidelines are being reviewed as part of the cyclical Policy and Administrative Guidelines Review process, input from all SEAC members is welcome. To be considered, all submissions must identify the specific policy and include your name, phone number, address and affiliation with Niagara Catholic.
- There are currently no Policies and Administrative Guidelines being reviewed as part of the cyclical Policy and Administrative Guidelines Review process at the time of this meeting.

5. **SEAC Sub Committees Updates**

- The Lead from each Sub Committee gave an update to the group.
- Discussion followed.

C. **AGENCY REPORTS**

1. **Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – Madeline Zoelman**

- The LDANR had an exciting summer as they hosted their S.O.A.R. transition program with both Niagara Catholic and the DSBN. The LDANR served a total of 14 students going into a Niagara Catholic High School this summer. The LDANR also hosted its annual LDA Parent Conference Event which featured talks from our guest speakers about learning disabilities and mental health,

strategies for teaching kids accountability, and the science behind learning disabilities.

- They also launched into their fall programming where they will continue to offer their JUMP Math and Reading Rocks programs, both of which are full (although they still have volunteer spots available if any students are looking to gain volunteer hours). They will also continue to offer their BEST Coping Skills program and S.O.A.R. Secondary and Post-Secondary for students transitioning into high school and post-secondary.
- New this year, they are launching a youth support group called Y2Y for individuals between the ages of 14-24 who have a learning disability and/or ADHD and also a webinar series featuring guest speakers on several topics such as the disability tax credit, IEPs/IPRCs, and psycho-educational assessments. All of their offerings this fall will continue to be virtual, moving hopefully towards a hybrid program and service model this winter season.

2. Niagara Children's Centre – Dorothy Harvey

- NIL Report

3. Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Karen Murphy

- Autism Ontario is moving to a regional approach. Karen Murphy wanted to share how this will impact the Niagara Chapter. They will now be able to serve the Niagara, Halton, Norfolk and Hamilton-Brant areas. With these changes, they will be able to offer services to all areas a lot of which have had no services.

4. Down Syndrome Niagara – Pina Palombo

- NIL Report

5. Mainstream – Lorraine Smith

- The Options Niagara program is officially open as of **September 7, 2021**, supports will be offered by following the regulated COVID-19 restrictions. Over the next few months, their Resource Facilitators will be reaching out to various schools to share information, connecting with teachers and be part of the transitional planning for the identified students.

6. Community Living Port Colborne / Wainfleet – Rita Smith

- Community Living Port Colborne - Wainfleet is a charitable and progressive organization employing over 150 staff and delivers supports to over 200 people with intellectual disabilities. Their organization provides inclusive person-centred supports to children, youth and adults and their families.
They are currently hiring Part-Time and Full-Time Residential Support Workers.
- If you are looking for a rewarding and exciting opportunity to join their quality organization, please email your resume to schedulingcl@clpcw.com.
- They have hired a new CEO, Joanna Mataya. Joanna will be joining the team on **September 20, 2021**. Joanna comes to them from Hospice Niagara. Joanna spent many years with NHS and in her final role was site Director for the Fort Erie and Port Colborne Hospitals. A Port Colborne resident, Joanna is a great communicator with an extensive network in the community who will bring a level of energy and passion to CLPCW.
- As more and more people are vaccinated we are looking forward to being able to offer more programs for the individuals we support.

7. Pathstone Mental Health – Tara Kelly

- NIL Report

D. STAFF REPORTS

1. Elementary Principals – Chris Kerho

- He shared his excitement about having many of his students returning to in-person learning.

2. Secondary Principals – Adele Filice

- We are happy to welcome Adele back to SEAC and thank Kelly Majka for filling in during Adele's vacancy.
- She is now the Principal of Holy Catholic Secondary School.
- She too is excited to have the students back in school.

3. BRTs – Anthony Di Toro, Maria Kish, Vincent Mancuso and Alfonso Monachino

- The Niagara Catholic District School Board Behaviour Resource team presented a team authored tier one behaviour support resource. This resource is designed for use by Educational Resource Teachers and school administrators to continue to support classroom teachers and school support staff in responding to challenging behaviours in proactive, supportive and positive ways.
- The focus of the resource is rooted in the social-emotional learning and wellness of students. The framework is offered as a guide to staff for responding consistently to behaviour based on a [THINK-FEEL-ACT](#) model. What students think, impacts how they feel, which impacts their actions, reactions and behaviours. Co-regulating with children by walking with them through big emotions and by explicitly teaching, modelling and coaching, is foundational to our vocation as Catholic educators in serving the most vulnerable among us.
- The Behaviour Resource Teachers (BRTs) explained this through a video presentation.

4. Student Support Coordinators – Jim Di Gioia, Danny Giancola and David O'Rourke

- In partnership with Niagara Catholic Continuing Education, Student Support Summer programs took place this past July and August. Summer funding was provided by the Ministry of Education which allowed us to offer three programs for the first time in Niagara Catholic.

a) Virtual Summer Learning Program – Reading Intervention

- o This 4-week virtual program supported students in grades 2-6 to improve their overall reading skills in a fun and interactive manner with the use of LEXIA. LEXIA is a research-proven computer program that provides explicit, systematic, personalized learning while targeting literacy skill gaps. LEXIA also provides teachers with informative data and targeted lessons that aim to close the gap. Other components of the summer program included a Catholic Faith component, functional numeracy skills, Zones of Regulation and social and emotional well-being. The program was supported by an Educational Resource Teacher and Child/Youth Worker. Educational Assistants were also available to support the program. 115 students were enrolled and 12 classroom teachers were hired to deliver the program. Class sizes ranged from 4-7 students which offered intense and direct instruction for all students. We thank all of these students and families for their commitment to this program.

b) S.O.A.R. Secondary Program

- The 8-day **S.O.A.R. Secondary** program is designed to help students successfully transition into **high school** by teaching them about the different supports available for them, how to recognize their strengths and difficulties, and how to communicate what they need to others to be successful. This program was offered in partnership with the Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region, (LDANR). Two Niagara Catholic teachers and an Educational Resource Teacher were hired for the program. The LDANR provided facilitators who lead the program. Niagara Catholic staff assisted with tailoring the information specifically for students in our Board. 14 students in grades 7-8 enrolled in this summer program. We would like to thank the LDANR for this partnership and the opportunity to support our students during this very important time in their life. We would also like to thank these students and families for their participation in the S.O.A.R. secondary program.

c) Student Support Transition Program

- The Ministry of Education also provided funding for Transition Supports for students with Special Education needs. Student Support staff accepted this position to provide transition support for students from **August 23 – August 31**. Student Support staff were available to administrators, school staff and families for consultation and collaboration to best prepare for students' return to in-person learning.

Summer School

- Summer school credit courses were again offered for students in grades 9-12. Summer school credits were offered in both a synchronous and asynchronous format. Students with special education needs were supported by a classroom teacher, educational resource teacher and educational assistant where necessary. With approximately 2000 students served in a variety of summer courses/programs, 159 of those students were on an Individual Education Plan (IEP). We wish these students and all students in Niagara Catholic a very successful school year.

New Literacy Programs to Niagara Catholic

- Empower and Lexia are the new programs purchased by Niagara Catholic for students. Plans are underway for staff training and program delivery to students. A more detailed report will be provided at an upcoming SEAC meeting to explain the implementation of these literacy programs.

SEAC Parent Survey Update

- The SEAC Survey sub-committee has worked throughout the summer to consolidate the questions and feedback that was received last year. A link to the working copy of the survey is provided to members of SEAC for everyone's awareness. SEAC members are asked to review the survey and provide final feedback by **September 30th**.
- The Survey sub-committee will then complete the final draft and bring it to all SEAC members during the October meeting as an agenda item seeking a motion to be released to the broader parent community.
- Link to draft SEAC parent survey: <https://forms.gle/AV6Ggbwsq4HfYoiH9>

Nursing Shortages

- There is a nursing shortage from Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS) in the

Hamilton, Niagara, Haldimand and Brant areas. Niagara Catholic learned last week that HCCSS could not deliver enough nurses to meet the nursing needs in our schools. It is the responsibility of HCCSS to secure these services. The Student Support department has contacted the schools that are affected, and we are working with principals to focus on personalization of service to meet the uniqueness of each situation.

5. Director of Education – Camillo Cipriano

- Director of Education Cipriano thanked staff, senior staff and the Board of Trustees for all of their dedication and hard work in ensuring that opening day was so successful for our students. He is hopeful that our SEAC meetings will soon be able to be in-person rather than through Microsoft Teams. He is looking forward to another year being a part of SEAC.

E. TRUSTEE REPORTS

- Trustee Burtnik thanked the BRTs for the moving presented. She also extended her appreciation to the Committee Members for their continued dedication to supporting our Special Education students.

F. STUDENT REPORT

- With the commencement of the new school year, students across Niagara Catholic are excited to get back into in-person learning, and participate in extracurricular sports and after-school clubs. Student Senate is hosting its first meeting of the school year on **Wednesday, September 14th**, and they are excited to facilitate activities for students across the NCDSB to enjoy.

G. NCPIC REPORT

- NIL Report

H. NOTICES OF MOTION

- NIL Report

I. FUTURE MEETINGS / INFORMATION ITEMS

- NIL Report

J. MOMENT OF SILENCE / REFLECTION OF LIFE

- Co-Chair Zoelman offered a moment of silence and reflection.

K. NEXT MEETING

- The next meeting is **Wednesday, October 6, 2021 at 6:30 pm** (Microsoft Teams Meeting).

M. ADJOURNMENT

- Moved by Serena Butera
- Seconded by Karen Murphy

THAT the **September 8, 2021** meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee be adjourned.

CARRIED

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.