



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

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee held on **Wednesday, November 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. Land Acknowledgement

- Co-Chair (Zoelman) Cipriano read the Land Acknowledgement.

2. Opening Prayers

- Chair Racine read an opening prayer.

3. Roll Call

Members	Affiliations	Yes	Excused
Cipriano (Zoelman), Madeline	Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region	✓	
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	✓	
Shawano, Willow	Indigenous Representative		✓
Smith, Lorraine	Mainstream	✓	
Smith, Rita	Community Living Port Colborne/Wainfleet	✓	
Burtnik, Kathy	• Trustee of the Board	✓	
Fera, Frank	• Trustee of the Board		✓
Huibers, Larry	• Chair of the Board	✓	
Butera, Serena	• Student Senate Representative	✓	
Filice, Adele	• Principal, Secondary	✓	
Kerho, Chris	• Principal, Elementary	✓	

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, **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 Madeline (Zoelman) Cipriano
- Seconded by Rita Smith

THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee approves the Agenda of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **November 3, 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 October 6, 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 **October 6, 2021**, as presented.

CARRIED

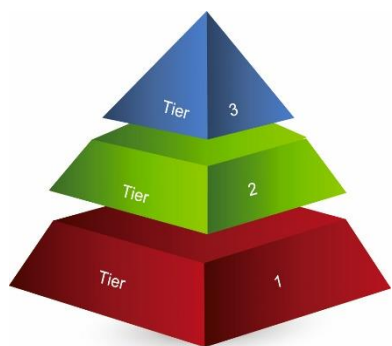
B. PRESENTATION

1. **Speech-Language Services at Niagara Catholic – presented by Katherine Grzybala, SLP**

a) Speech-Language Services – Tiered Model of Services

- Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) are trained professionals who have specialized skills, and clinical training in the assessment and management of communication, literacy and swallowing disorders. SLPs have many roles in schools and are essential members of educational teams supporting students of all ages with speech, language, literacy and communication challenges to achieve their academic and personal potential.
- Well-developed speech, language and communication skills are vital to students' academic and social achievement. Academic success is dependent on solid oral language skills, which are the gateway to written communication skills. SLPs have distinct expertise in developing oral and written language skills, supporting successful learning and helping students make social connections in and out of the classroom. They also have specialized training in augmentative and alternative communication. Without well-developed communication skills, students may run the risk of falling behind their peers academically, becoming emotionally overwhelmed or withdrawn at school.
- Niagara Catholic's SLPs provide a range of services which, follow a Tiered Model Approach to services. This can include school consultations, screenings, assessments, classroom-

based programming, educator training, mediated staff training, and parental programming. Niagara Catholic's SLPs make referrals to and liaise with the Niagara Children's Centre [i.e., School-Based Rehabilitation Services (SBRS), Preschool Speech and Language Program (PSLP), Early Years Therapy Team, and Communication Assessment & Team Support (CAST)]. Niagara Catholic's SLPs do not provide direct 1:1 treatment services to students, but support students through in-class and home-based programming recommendations.



The Tiered Model of Speech-Language Service Delivery represents the level of services that are associated with the learner's needs. The various Tiered Services are designed to provide a set process aimed at improving a student's response to targeted remediation/instruction and student outcomes.

Tier 1: Universal Services - Beneficial for All - Not Student Specific

Tier 2: Targeted Services - Necessary for Some - Student Specific
Assessment/Programming; Mild to moderate Support Needs

Tier 3: Intensive Services - Essential for Few - Student Specific
Assessment/Programming; Intensive services Significant or Complex Student Needs

b) Tier 1 – Universal Design with a Focus on Capacity Building (not student specific and beneficial for all)

- Whole class learning approaches, preventative services, educator capacity building, system capacity building, and parental capacity building.
- Support to Kindergarten teams to foster the building blocks of language.
- Teacher consultation regarding general communication/language skills.
- Teacher in-servicing (e.g., Teacher Talk, Oral Language at Your Fingertips).
- Professional development through Google forums, Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

c) Tier 2 – Student Specific Assessment & Programming (necessary for some)

- Supports at-risk or exceptional students requiring individual programming, curriculum accommodations and/or modifications.
- Direct student language assessment can result in the development of personalized and precise targeted interventions and mediated staff training with a focus on language and/or articulation programming and/or literacy skills development.
- School team services or single-serve approach; coordination with community agencies as needed.
- Assessment of articulation/voice/fluency with referral to School-Based Rehabilitation Services (SBRS/Niagara Children's Centre).
- Programming for school and home driven by formal assessment (i.e. internal/external assessment).
- Specific strategies/resources provided to classroom teacher regarding a student.
- Caseload measures reflect that the majority of speech-language services fall into Tier 2.

d) Tier 3 – Intensive Student Specific Assessment & Programming (essential for few)

- Supports students who require comprehensive language assessment, highly individualized programming and modified or alternative curriculum.
- Students with special needs fall into this category of support, where an intensive and collaborative approach is likely.
- School team approach and/or coordination with community agencies is likely (e.g., Niagara Children’s Centre PSLP, Early Years Team, CAST)
- Assessment of a broader range of speech and language needs; goal setting with family and team
- Specific strategies/resources provided to CT regarding the student following the assessment
- Recommendations for Assistive Technology based on assessment results occur at this tier.

C. AGENDA ITEMS

1. December Meeting

- Superintendent Pizzoferrato shared with the group that our meetings will be moving to a hybrid format next meeting. For those Committee Members that are comfortable, we will be meeting in the Father Kenneth Burns Room at the Catholic Education Centre, but also streaming it live for those Members that wish to attend virtually.
- Tomorrow NCPIC is moving to streaming their meeting live and offering a hybrid meeting. We are hopeful to learn from NCPIC’s meeting to help shape our future meetings.
- He told the group that additional information will be provided closer to the December meeting.
- Finally, it has been a tradition to have a Christmas social during our December meeting. As we navigate returning to an in-person meeting, we will postpone our social to the Spring. We are hopeful that there will be lesser restrictions and fewer COVID case numbers during that meeting.
- He closed by stating that he is looking forward to meeting next month in-person.

2. Letter from Trillium Lakeland DSB – Support for Bill 172 (An Act in Relation to FASD)

- A copy of the letter was circulated to all Committee Members by Jennifer Lanese before the meeting.
- Chair Racine opened the floor for discussion.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato offered to discuss with the Student Support Coordinators how Niagara Catholic can support FASD.
- He promised to update the Committee Members next month.

3. 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.

4. SEAC Sub Committee Update

- Updates were presented by the Lead representative from each of the Sub Committees.
- Discussion and questions followed.

D. AGENCY REPORTS

1. **Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – Madeline (Zoelman) Cipriano**
 - LDANR Winter program applications will open at 6:00 am on **Monday, November 22nd**. They will be running their BEST, SOAR, JUMP Math, and Reading Rocks Programs. They also still have space available in their Y2Y support group designed for youth aged 14-24 who have a diagnosed LD or ADHD. They are also holding their second webinar in their webinar series discussing IEPs and the IPRC process. It will feature speakers from the organization Justice for Children and Youth (JFCY). Applications and registration for the programs and services outlined above can be found on their agency's website: [Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region](#).
2. **Niagara Children's Centre – Dorothy Harvey**
 - NIL Report
3. **Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Karen Murphy**
 - NIL Report
4. **Down Syndrome Niagara – Pina Palombo**
 - Down Syndrome Niagara organized some Halloween activities for its members.
 - They are hoping to have a Christmas event next month.
 - For more information about the services that they provide, please visit their website: [Down Syndrome Niagara](#).
5. **Mainstream – Lorraine Smith**
 - The Options Niagara Program is fortunate to have several Niagara College students for the next few months. They are using their skills and abilities to offer online classes such as; coping strategies for people living with anxiety, relationship building, social skills building and cooking classes.
 - Mainstream and Gateway are co-hosting a Job Fair on **Saturday, November 6th** from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm at the **Optimist Club** in Niagara Falls.
 - For more information about the services that they provide, please visit their website: [Mainstream](#).
6. **Community Living Port Colborne / Wainfleet – Rita Smith**
 - The Youth and Family Support team is currently working on developing a partnership with the YMCA and Jericho House to run an **"Adventure Club"** which is a program to build resiliency and self-esteem in vulnerable children.
 - The **"People Helping People Achieve"** is a group of individuals with intellectual disabilities who are working together to weave themselves into the fabric of the community. This year they are celebrating their **20th Anniversary** in Port Colborne. 10 years ago the group officially buried the "R-word". The burial was both figurative and literal. They had a large "R" made which was biodegradable and they buried it. This week, the group planted a tree at Lock 8 Park in Port Colborne to symbolize the growth that the community has experienced in removing the "R" word. Together with Community Living the members of **"People Helping People Achieve"** hope that the new royal maple and its accompanying plaque will serve as a reminder to all who see it, that they are welcome in Port Colborne, no

matter what.

- To learn more about the group you can visit the Facebook page at [People Helping People Achieve](#).
- For more information about the services that they provide, please visit their website: [Community Living - Port Colborne/Wainfleet](#).

7. Pathstone Mental Health – Tara Kelly

- Tara Kelly shared with the group that Pathstone Mental Health opened up a walk-in clinic in Pelham in September.
- For more information about the services that they provide, please visit their website: [Pathstone Mental Health](#).

E. STAFF REPORTS

1. Elementary Principals – Chris Kerho

- Chris shared Good News Reports from Notre Dame College’s Family of Schools with the group.
St Mary (Welland)
 - o Carter Dery is a boy at St. Mary Catholic Elementary School in Welland who has Gorlin Syndrome and who suffers from epileptic seizures. In 2019, the community gave him his own personal Halloween festivities since he was going to miss it due to an important surgery. Carter has had many surgeries since and works extensively with his Educational Assistants and his teacher, Mrs. Cruise who has created a life-skills educational program to support Carter and his seizures.
 - o Carter and his family organized a Haunted Maze for Halloween to raise money for McMaster Children’s Hospital to help other children in need of support.
 - o [Welland Tribune Newspaper Article](#).
 - o [iHeart Radio & 610 CKTB Article](#).

2. Secondary Principals – Adele Filice

- Adele shared a Good News Report from Notre Dame College with the group.
Good News Report from Notre Dame College
 - o At Notre Dame College, they are thrilled to have their Music Therapist, Mendelt, back in person for bi-weekly sessions with our students. He is currently providing his services and talents to three of our secondary schools, Notre Dame, Lakeshore Catholic and Holy Cross. Mendelt discussed an idea with Josh (LC), Karen (HC) and Laura Sparkman, the Special Education Classroom teacher about having all the secondary Special Education classes get together, on Zoom, with him for music, fun and being together. All participating Secondary Schools think this was a fantastic idea! He was proposing the time of 8:45-9:15 am three to five times a week. Each class (and those doing school at home) would log in to Zoom (he would provide the link) and the student would all sing together for 30 minutes. The students can see their friends, choose their favourite songs and sing along. He thought that this would be fun to get the students from different schools together, regularly, through music. It would be similar to the ***Hooray for Hollywood***, event that Notre Dame College students attended at Lakeshore Catholic just before the lockdown. Laura agreed that these sessions would be enjoyable, based on her experience last School Year during the lockdown, especially since these sessions weren’t much different than having him

in person. They were surprised to find the students respond just as well online as in person. The sessions also have the added bonus of providing the opportunity for those students who are higher functioning to be able to practice their written communication skills through the group chat feature. Music is a great therapy tool and is calming for so many students, particularly for the non-verbal and autistic students that it would be more than worth the investment. She truly believes that the Music Therapy sessions are worth every penny and more. Mendelt has an amazing gift for connecting with every student on their level and bringing everyone joy through music.

- Letters were sent out to their local community agencies and they have been very fortunate to receive donations from the Kiwanis Club of Welland, Casa Dante and the Welland Optimist club. These donations help them purchase wipes, toothpaste and toothbrushes, nail files, Kleenex, which helps run their laundry program, cooking program and arts and crafts programs. All of these programs require the purchase of consumables regularly and are essential for helping their most needy students practice fine motor, self-care and life skills. These funds will also allow them to replace some of their damaged and unusable sensory equipment and purchase a few additional items. They are also hoping to save for the purchase of a Smartboard in the future.

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

a) Empower

- The Empower Reading program is underway in Niagara Catholic. Dedicated staff have begun the implementation of this program which targets students with literacy deficits. 60-minute lessons are carried out daily which provides targeted and intensive skill development.

b) Lexia

- Niagara Catholic has purchased the Lexia Reading Program. Lexia is a comprehensive technology-based literacy program that provides differentiated literacy instruction and accelerates learning for students who struggle. Lexia's research-proven program provides explicit, systematic, personalized learning while targeting skill gaps as they emerge, and providing teachers with the data and student-specific resources they need for individual or small-group instruction. As we continue to launch Lexia in Niagara Catholic, Information Sessions have been offered to all Principals, Vice-Principals, Education Resource Teachers, Secondary Special Education Classroom Teachers, Secondary Student Support Program Chairs and Central Staff.

c) Reporting

- Progress Reporting is now underway. Teachers, with the support of the Educational Resource Teacher, are in the process of creating comments on IEP Alternative Programs which will be provided to parents in addition to the Provincial Progress Report.

d) SEAC Survey Update

- The SEAC Parent Survey has been vetted by Senior Administration. It was recommended that the survey be brought to the Niagara Catholic Research and Ethics Committee for their input. A proposal will be submitted on behalf of the Survey Subcommittee and updates will be provided to SEAC accordingly.

e) November ERT Meeting

- An ERT Meeting is scheduled for November. Tentative agenda topics include Permission Click, Trillium Demonstration School Presentation, SEA-it Review. Permission Click is a web tool used to manage forms and notes requiring parent/guardian consent. This can be done in a paperless manner which is convenient and saves time. The Trillium Demonstration School is a specialized residential school program for students with severe learning disabilities and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, whose educational needs cannot be adequately met in their local Boards. It provides highly individualized instruction, counselling, social skills and self-advocacy training to enable students to function effectively when they return to their home schools. They also provide in-service teacher education and consultative services to School Boards to assist them in developing local programs for students with learning disabilities. The presentation will focus on these services. SEA-IT is our internal system to deliver and manage SEA equipment necessary for students. ERTs will receive a short review of the functionality of this system.

4. Superintendent Pizzoferrato

a) School Visits at Halton Catholic District School Board

- Superintendent Pizzoferrato shared with the group that he and the Student Support Coordinators travelled to two elementary schools from Halton Catholic District School Board this afternoon to explore some of the strategies used by these schools regarding a Regional Classroom format. Director Cipriano made these arrangements for them to visit those schools.
- From all accounts, Superintendent Pizzoferrato and the Student Support Coordinators witnessed energizing techniques and classroom structures and will be exploring the possibility of adopting some of these strategies to enhance our service for Niagara Catholic students and families.
- They are looking forward to connecting with schools in Hamilton from the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board to consider additional options.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato promised to share their experience with the group next month.

b) Supporting New Niagara Catholic Students

- The Student Support Department is always looking at ways to support new Niagara Catholic students and we have introduced a School Support Visit model to work with school teams in an effort to assist them on a short term basis to assess and manage their new arrivals to Niagara Catholic as we work to ensure their school success.
- They are continually working to ensure that all students receive a personalized level of service and this addition to our approach in Student Support has been well received by schools that have been visited to date.

c) Partnership Within Departments

- Niagara Catholic is exploring a partnership with different departments to align services in complimentary ways.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato explained the benefits of doing this allows us to complement and enhance our services for Niagara Catholic students without duplication of service.
- Recently Andrea Bozza, Julia Nemcko and Krista Wood proudly represented Niagara Catholic at the “When Faith Meets Pedagogy 2021” hosted by the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops virtually in October. Together as a group, they fashioned a presentation that was very well received by all attendees at the Conference.
- Krista and her team are still receiving positive feedback from the attendees and they are looking at further ways to align their approach to serve the needs of the whole child – body, mind and spirit.
- The title of their presentation was “Mental Health Behaviour and Faith, a Collaborative Approach to Transferring from Virtual to In-Person Learning”.
- The intent of the Conference is to offer opportunities to share presentations from a faith-based perspective among all educators in Catholic Schools across Ontario. Their presentation allowed them to showcase the fine work coming out of each of their departments in a combined presentation.

5. Director of Education Cipriano

- Director of Education Cipriano thanked Gino and the Student Support Coordinators for travelling to the Halton schools today.
- He emphasized that we support all children and we can learn from the strategies and techniques that the other Boards are using.

F. TRUSTEE REPORTS

1. Trustee Burtnik

- Trustee Burtnik told the group that the Board of Trustees saw the Behaviour Resource Teachers’ Presentation, “Who Do I Say I Am”.
- It was well-received by all Board of Trustees.
- She said that the presentation was a positive message that blends student support and faith.
- She also provided an update on the MYSP and stated that the Board is on track to finalizing this process.
- She closed by stating that she is confident that the fingerprint of SEAC and all who shared insights will be included in the final plan.

2. Chair of the Board Huibers

- Chair of the Board Huibers echoed Trustee Burtnik’s admiration for the Behaviour Resource Teachers’ Presentation.
- He provided a summary of the dates for the upcoming Board Meetings.
- He closed by asking for any feedback/suggestions for any Committee Member who may have attended a Board Meeting virtually as they are now being streamed live.

- The Board of Trustees would like to hear from individuals for their opinion on the quality and format of the meetings.
- Individuals are encouraged to email Gino any feedback or suggestion so he can share them with the Board of Trustees.

G. STUDENT REPORT

1. Serena Butera

- Serena Butera shared with the group that Student Councils across the District have been hard at work continuing their activities through initiating separate school-wide Pilgrimage fundraisers and Halloween festivities.
- The Saint Paul Special Education Class won the school-wide pumpkin painting contest and have earned a donut party that week!
- Students appreciate the growing sense of normalcy in their schools and are excited to continue to participate in and outside of the classroom in sports, leadership and extracurricular activities and more.

H. NCPIC REPORT

- NIL Report
- *We are still appealing for a Committee Member to represent SEAC at the NCPIC meetings. If you're interested in volunteering, please email Jennifer Lanese (Jennifer.lanese@ncdsb.com). Yvonne Anderson will be providing the group with an update until a Committee Member volunteers to represent SEAC at NCPIC.*

I. NOTICES OF MOTION

- There were no Notices of Motion.

J. FUTURE MEETINGS / INFORMATION ITEMS

- Superintendent Pizzoferrato spoke briefly on the documents regarding Remote Learning. Jennifer Lanese distributed those documents to the Committee Members prior to the Meeting for their awareness and encouragement to share with the many families that they support. A copy of the documents were also uploaded to the Chat prior to the meeting.

K. MOMENT OF SILENCE / REFLECTION OF LIFE

- Chair Racine offered a moment of silence and reflection.

L. NEXT MEETING

- **Wednesday, December 1, 2021 at 6:30 pm** – Catholic Education Centre (Hybrid Format).
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato will provide more information closer to the meeting.

M. ADJOURNMENT

- Moved by Karen Murphy
- Seconded by Madeline (Zoelman) Cipriano

THAT the **November 3, 2021** meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee be adjourned.

CARRIED

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.