



## MINUTES OF THE NIAGARA CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE VIRTUAL INFORMATION MEETING

**SEPTEMBER 9, 2021**

Minutes of the Electronic Meeting of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee, held on Thursday, September 9, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. Superintendent Forsyth-Sells informed the members that the NCPIC meeting of September 9, 2021 would be recorded.

Co-Chair Kouroushis called the meeting to order at 6:33p.m.

### A. ROUTINE MATTERS

#### 1. Land Acknowledgement and Opening Prayer

Fr. Paul MacNeil led the Land Acknowledgement and 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	√		
<b>Trustees</b>				
Dino Sicoli	Trustee	√		
Leanne Prince	Trustee		√	

Regrets: Carrie Vernelli, Shonna Daly, Jitto Tom Uthup, George Roussos, Lou Stranges, Leanne Prince, Josie Rocca

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

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by: Marilyn Fabiano

**THAT** the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee approve the agenda of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of September 9, 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 May 6, 2021**

Moved by: Jeremy Harb

**THAT** the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee approve the minutes of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of May 6, 2021 as presented.

**CARRIED**

**B. PRESENTATION**

**C. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. Faith Formation

- Nil Report

2. Goals/Parent Engagement Events

- Nil Report

**D. POLICY FEEDBACK**

Co-Chair Kouroushis reported that there are no policies currently being vetted.

**E. CHAIR/CO-CHAIR REPORTS**

Co-Chair Kouroushis stated that she and Chair Vernelli wanted to take this opportunity on behalf of the current members along with past members of NCPIC to thank Shonna Daly for her many, many years of volunteering and dedication to Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee. "Shonna during this time you have volunteered your time and passion to many meetings, events, along with keeping up your other duties within your children's schools as parent chair. You have always advocated for our children's Catholic education and we thank you. Know that you have made a difference at Niagara Catholic and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts!"

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

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells welcomed and thanked the members for their ongoing commitment to parent engagement in the Niagara Catholic District School Board. Director Cipriano also thanked the members for volunteering their time and the important role that they play in Niagara Catholic and that the parent voice is an invaluable asset to the Board.

1. Ministry of Education: [Guide to Reopening Schools for the 2021-2022 School Year](#)

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that the link to view the [Ministry of Education: Guide to Reopening Schools for the 2021-2022 School Year](#) was provided for information.

2. Niagara Catholic: [2021-2022 Reopening and Safety Guide](#)

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that the link to view the [Niagara Catholic Reopening and Safety Guide for the 2021-2022 School Year](#) was provided for information.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that Niagara Catholic is focused on the health and safety of students and staff as the first priority following the guidelines from the Government, the Ministry, Niagara Public Health and the Board. Superintendent Forsyth-Sells also stated that Niagara Catholic is very pleased that a high percentage of our students have chosen to return to in-person learning. Superintendent Forsyth-Sells asked for any questions or comments.

- Jeremy Harb inquired if there was going to be a COVID vaccine mandate for eligible students in Niagara Catholic. Superintendent Forsyth-Sells responded that vaccinations for students is not a Ministry of Education mandate, but a Ministry of Health mandate. Superintendent Forsyth-Sells shared that she is aware that several organizations have reached out to the Minister of Education, Lecce asking for vaccinations for students, but it is not a Board decision to mandate vaccinations. Niagara Catholic follows Ministry and Public Health guidelines. The Board is reviewing our statistics of vaccinations for eligible students and we are encouraging vaccinations.

Follow-up inquiry, will Niagara Catholic mandate vaccination of employees of the Board?

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that the Ministry of Education has asked school boards across Ontario to collect and provide data on the status of employee vaccinations.

Director Cipriano added that all Niagara Catholic staff are required to provide an attestation and proof of being fully vaccinated. If a staff member has not been vaccinated, they are required to complete rapid anti-gen testing twice per week and provide a negative test result twice a week before entering a school or Board facility. The rapid anti-gen tests are provided by the Ministry and there is no cost to any staff.

Follow-up Jeremy Harb, will we be returning to in-person meetings for further NCPIC meetings. Superintendent Forsyth-Sells responded that we would certainly like to return to in-person meetings, but at this time we are bound by the Ministry physical distancing guidelines and that the Board continues to follow Niagara Public Health guidelines for meetings and gatherings. Director Cipriano added that it is our plan and hope to return to in-person meetings. If we cannot accommodate all members we would be happy to implement a hybrid model of some members participating in-person and some participating virtually.

- Trustee Sicoli reported that all Trustees across Ontario are sending letters to the Minister of Education and that Patrick Daly, President of the Ontario Catholic Trustees Association is speaking on behalf of all Trustees caring for the safety and well-being of our students and staff. Further to our advocacy during meetings with you, Ministry of Education staff and others who are in support of the ever growing number of public health experts and medical professions are strongly recommending mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations for all eligible publicly funded school staff, volunteers, bus drivers, trustees and visitors. In addition that the Immunization of the Schools Pupils Act be amended to include COVID-19 as one of the mandatory vaccinations for eligible students along with measles, mumps, diphtheria, polio. Trustee Sicoli reported that Director Cipriano shared a copy of the letter from Patrick Daly sent to the Minister and that he felt that it was a terrific letter and advocacy on behalf of all of our families and parents in the province of Ontario. Trustee Sicoli shared that he hopes that the Minister and the Ford Government will listen.
  - Marilyn Fabiano requested clarification on the completion of the COVID Screening from September 7-17 of this month or would this be an ongoing expectation.
  - Superintendent Forsyth-Sells responded that September 7-17 was the timeline that was provided by the Ministry of Education and that data would be collected from school boards during this timeline.
  - Director Cipriano added that the expectation from the Ministry is that active student screening only take place from September 7- 17, 2021. However, local public health has strongly recommended that active student screening continue beyond the September 17 date. We are seeing more and more that different local public health units have different guidance. In the last week or so, Dr. Hirji, Acting Medical Officer from Niagara Public Health provided guidance on elementary schools which is much stricter than the guidance at the Ministry level. Niagara Catholic will follow Niagara Public Health and continue active student screening past the Ministry date. We are hopeful that there will be no glitches. It is a new process for our parents and the Board. It is a screening process that was created by Niagara Catholic to make sure that the data stays private within own servers and systems. We are hopeful that by September 17 that most parents will be used to the process.
3. Ministry of Education: PIC Chairs and School Board Leads, June 8, 2021 Conversation Summary
- Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that the summary report of the EDU Parent Involvement Committee and Board Leads Meeting that took place on June 8, 2021 was provided to all members for information.
4. 2021-2022 Parent Reaching Out (PRO) Grant
- Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported for the 2021-2022 school year, the Niagara Catholic District School Board has received \$26,172.96 to support parent engagement projects.

Projects for the 2021-2022 school year are to demonstrate a commitment to respecting the role of parents in students' educational experiences by working with parents or seeking parent input on how schools can improve in at least one of the following areas:

- addressing social inclusion and racism specifically anti-Asian, anti-Black, and anti-Indigenous racism and other prejudices toward racialized and marginalized groups;

- creating a safe and welcoming environment;
- demonstrating respect for parents as valued partners within the education system regarding decisions about their child's education;
- enhancing communication with teachers; and
- informing parents about the expectations of the Ontario Curriculum and supporting resources.

#### 5. 2021-2022 NCPIC Membership

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that today's meeting of September 9, 2021 is the last NCPIC meeting of the 2020-2021 school year and thanked all members for their support and commitment to the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee. Superintendent Forsyth-Sells extended a special thank you to Shonna Daly for her numerous years of service on the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that:

- Community representatives are to complete and submit their application no later than Wednesday, September 15, 2021.
- Parents/Guardians are to complete and submit the parent/guardian nomination form no later than Friday, October 8, 2021

Members coming to an end of their term are encouraged to complete a nomination form for the 2021-2022 school year. For the 2021-2022 the following parent/guardian positions are available.

Fort Erie/Port Colborne/Wainfleet	2 positions
Grimsby/Lincoln/West Lincoln/Pelham	1 position
Niagara Falls/Niagara-on-the-Lake	2 positions
St. Catharines	3 positions
Thorold/Merritton	1 position
Welland	1 position

#### **2021-2022 Meeting dates:**

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that the NCPIC will continue to meet on the first Thursday of the month on a bi-monthly basis in-person or electronically. The meeting dates for the 2021-2022 school year are as follows:

- November 4, 2021 (first meeting of the 2021-2022 membership)
- January 13, 2022
- March 3, 2022
- May 5, 2022
- September 2022 (TBD)

#### 6. 2021-2022 OAPCE Membership

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that on July 1, 2021 the Director of Education, Camillo Cipriano received a letter from OAPCE extending an invitation to renew the Niagara Catholic District School Board membership. The membership for the 2021-2022 school year is \$3990.00 (\$70.00 per school).

NCPIC members by consensus were in support of renewing the OAPCE membership. NCPIC funds would support the membership fee. Parent members who are interested in representing Niagara Catholic as the OAPCE Regional Director are to send an email with their intent to Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells no later than Friday, September 17, 2021.

7. NCPIC Financial Report

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported on the finances of the NCPIC for 2021-2022.

**G. COMMUNITY REPORTS**

**Society of St. Vincent de Paul-Shelley Gilbert**

Shelley Gilbert reported that:

- Volunteers are slowly returning to the soup kitchens, stores and food banks.
- Individual bagged lunches are being handed out at the soup kitchen (approximately 100 per day).
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul is looking for a new manager of the soup kitchen.
- The sea container for Nunavut was sent on September 8, 2021. This year Fr. Daniel wanted food items for his after school program along with school supplies and games to 30 to 40 kids per day after school.
- Thrift stores are open again and accepting donations.
- St. Vincent de Paul was busy over the summer supporting people with groceries and gift cards.

**H. SEAC REPORT**

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported on behalf of SEAC:

- SEAC held their first annual meeting on Wednesday, September 8, 2021.
- Tara Kelly from Pathstone Mental Health is a newly nominated Committee Member due to the recent retirement of Bill Helmeczi after 12 years of service on the SEAC. We welcome Tara to SEAC.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato provided an overview of the SEAC meeting procedures to the Committee Members highlighting Board By-Laws Policy, Policy No. 100.1 at the SEAC Meeting.
- Superintendent Pizzoferrato would also like to encourage community organizations that are interested in being considered for a seat at the SEAC table, who may not currently hold a seat on the committee at this time, to please visit: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/seac/members.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/seac/members.html) which discusses SEAC membership and eligibility to serve. If you are interested in becoming a SEAC Committee Member after you have reviewed the membership requirement found in the web link, please contact Jennifer Lanese, Administrative Assistant at [jennifer.lanese@ncdsb.com](mailto:jennifer.lanese@ncdsb.com) to express your interest or to request addition information.

**I. BISHOP/DIOCESAN REPORT-Fr. Paul MacNeil**

Fr. Paul MacNeil:

- Catholic churches are currently open and still practising physical distancing.
- Sunday obligation is still modified; however, parishes welcome parishioners to attend in-person.

**J. STUDENT SENATE REPORT-Allan Buri**

Allan Buri reported that:

- In our final monthly meeting, the 2020-2021 NCDSB Student Senate provided valuable and thoughtful input on the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan in the form of interactive discussions and survey questions; similar to the one NCPIC participated in. A predominant theme was student's mental health, seeing schools as hubs for social activity, and creating an environment where *all* students who choose to attend a Niagara Catholic school feel valued.
- The Senate selected two exceptional Niagara Catholic students as recipients of the Student Senate scholarships.
- In our transitional meeting, outgoing student senators and trustee Luca Di Pietro were issued fond farewells, the incoming Senate was initiated and elections were held to determine various positions.
- Allan Buri will be continuing as the Student Senate's representative on the NCPIC.
- The 2021-22 Senate kicks off this September with Sydney Yott and Steffen Zylstra as student trustees.

**K. STAFF REPORTS-Joe Tornabuono**

Principal Tornabuono, provided elementary school updates for information.

**L. TRUSTEE REPORTS-Dino Sicoli**

Trustee Sicoli provided his report earlier under the Niagara Catholic Reopening Plan.

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

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells shared that presentations on Mental Health and Well-Being, Program and Innovation curriculum and curriculum expectations, and Special Education are available and can be arranged for future meetings. Superintendent Forsyth-Sells will commit to a Mental Health and Well-Being presentation for the NCPIC meeting of November 4, 2021.

**N. NEXT MEETING:** The first meeting of the NCPIC for the 2021-2022 school year will be held on November 4, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

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

**P. ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by: Jeremy Harb

**THAT** the September 9, 2021, meeting of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee be adjourned.

**CARRIED**

This meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

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