



## MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 2022

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee held on **Wednesday, April 6, 2022** at 6:30 pm. Electronic Meeting in Compliance with Education Act Section 207 and Ontario Regulation 463/97 Section 5.1 (2)

Chair Cipriano called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

### A. ROUTINE MATTERS

#### 1. Land Acknowledgement

- Co-Chair Somma read the Land Acknowledgement.

#### 2. Opening Prayers

- Chair Cipriano read an opening prayer.

#### 3. Roll Call

Members	Affiliations	Yes	Excused
Cipriano, Madeline	Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region	✓	
Maxwell, Michelle	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		✓
Shawanoo, Willow	Indigenous Representative		✓
Smith, Lorraine	Mainstream	✓	
Smith, Rita	Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet)	✓	
Somma, Monique	Community Living (Welland/Pelham)	✓	
Burtmik, Kathy	• <b>Trustee of the Board</b>	✓	
Sicoli, Dino	• <b>Trustee of the Board</b>		✓
Butera, Serena	• <b>Student Senate Representative</b>	✓	
Filice, Adele	• <b>Principal, Secondary</b>	✓	
Walsh, Susy	• <b>Principal, Elementary</b>	✓	

Christalla (Chris) Kouroushis was an observer from NCPIC that evening. The following staff members were in attendance: **Gino Pizzoferrato**, Superintendent of Education, **Giancarlo Vetrone**, Superintendent of Business & Financial Services, **Jim Di Gioia**, Coordinator of Student Support, **Lu Baiocco**, Recording Secretary/Temporary Administrative Assistant to Superintendent Pizzoferrato. Director of Education, **Camillo Cipriano** sent his regrets.

4. **Approval of the Agenda**

- Moved by Lorraine Smith
- Seconded by Rita Smith

**THAT** THE Special Education Advisory Committee approves the Agenda of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **April 6, 2022**.

**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 March 9, 2022.**

- Moved by Lorraine Smith
- Seconded by Rita Smith

**THAT** THE Special Education Advisory Committee approves the Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **March 9, 2022**, as presented.

**CARRIED**

**B. PRESENTATION**

1. **Special Education Financial Report Presentation - Giancarlo Vetrone, Superintendent of Business & Financial Services**

- Superintendent Vetrone presented Special Education Budget
- February 17, 2022 Ministry of Education announced the 2022-2023 Annual Budget and answered committee questions about funding.
- Grants for student needs updates
  - Supports for de-streaming and learning renewal
  - Enhanced supports for mental health
  - Enhanced supports for special education
  - Enhanced accountability measures
  - Enhancements for Principal/Vice-Principal negotiated terms and conditions
  - Technical and routine updates

**C. AGENDA ITEMS**

1. **Discussion of PPM 81**

- Letter from a parent was read to the Committee with privacy provisions.
- The letter states "PPM 81 needs to be changed to allow for a parent to perform the necessary medical interventions for a student with medical complexities in lieu of a nurse,

if the family chooses.”

- Chair Cipriano stated the letter is an awareness piece.
- A motion put forward to draft a letter acknowledging the letter was shared at the SEAC table and it be shared with them via Superintendent Pizzoferrato.
- Lorraine Smith agreed with the motion.
- Co-Chair Somma seconded the motion.

**2. Discussion of Overview of Trustee Letter - Disability Definition**

- Motion was read by Chair Cipriano to the Committee.
- The motion will be shared with Superintendent Pizzoferrato to be a joint presentation.

**3. SEAC Sub-Committee Updates**

**a) Communication Committee**

- Superintendent Pizzoferrato announced that the Board hired a new communications consultant, Aldo Parrotta.
- In the process of reviewing the SEAC brochure that was drafted by the committee.
- Hoping to have feedback to share for our May meeting.

**b) Survey Committee**

**NIL Report**

**c) Ministry Reports Committee**

**NIL Report**

**d) Policy Committee**

- A google form will be shared regarding the 6 policies out for vetting. Committee members will be able to provide feedback on the form.

**e) Policy up for Review**

- Chair Cipriano – Educational Field Trip Policy
- Concern that there is no mention of how field trips are handled for students with special education needs. How do we ensure that our students with special education needs are getting their needs met.
- Suggestion made that we facilitate the conversation using the feedback process to offer feedback on the policy that is of concern at this point in time.

**D. AGENCY REPORTS**

**LDANR – Chair Cipriano**

- The LDANR will begin its Spring programming at the end of April which includes Reading Rocks, BEST, and SOAR. We are also excited to partner with Niagara Catholic to offer our SOAR Secondary and Post-Secondary programs again this Spring. We will also be opening our fall program applications for our JUMP Math, BEST, Y2Y, SOAR, and Reading Rocks programs on Monday, May 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 am. We encourage any families to reach out with questions to [info@ldaniagara.org](mailto:info@ldaniagara.org).

**Niagara Children's Centre – Michelle Maxwell**

- Beginning process of CTCs as Hubs, Help Kids Shine campaign including Plasma Car Race fundraiser (Tues May 31), 3rd Annual Parent & Caregiver Conference (April 27th; <https://niagarachildrencentre.com/ncc/events>)

**Down Syndrome Niagara - Pina Palombo**

- World Down Syndrome Day was celebrated on Monday March 21, 2022. Communications to both school boards were sent out with information and resources on how to promote this event to raise awareness. Our community partners and schools across Niagara promoted this day by wearing mismatched socks "Rock Your Socks" day.
- The G-MC Homies with Chromies Foundation provided free of charge to our DS members and their families tickets to the Ice Dogs game on Sunday March 20, 2022 to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day. This was the first event since before COVID that our DS families were able to gather together. Members of the Down Syndrome Niagara group along with co-founder Blair Stayzer of the foundation dropped the puck at the game.
- Club Italia has chosen our Down Syndrome Niagara group as their charity of choice for their Pasta Fundraising night on Friday May 13, 2022 the event will be a Disco Night
- The Niagara Ice Dogs hockey association offered free tickets to our Down Syndrome Niagara group on Sunday April 10, 2022.
- The next Down Syndrome Niagara Group board meeting will be held on Sunday April 24, 2022. Location and time TBA

**Mainstream – Lorraine Smith**

**NIL Report**

**Community Living – (Port Colborne/Wainfleet) – Rita Smith**

- Have met with a couple of the Principals in Port Colborne in regards to after school programs. Opening up programs not just too special needs students but to all students.

**Community Living – (Welland/Pelham) – Monique Somma**

**NIL Report**

**E. STAFF REPORTS**

- **Superintendent Pizzoferrato**
  - Working on utilizing the funds that have been designated for tutoring purposes to provide opportunities to our students with needs, but also to the broader population as well.
  - Plans are underway for summer offerings that again will be a joint offering. Hoping to serve each third of the region with hubs in place.
- **Adele Filice**
  - I wanted to send you a few highlights from our Special Education classroom at

STM that can be discussed at your next SEAC meeting.

- Students are currently helping to run a snack bar at lunch. The STM snack bar runs two days a week and provides some healthy snack options for the student body to purchase while the cafeteria is closed. The students aid in taking and fulfilling orders and are learning some great skills that they could use beyond their high school years. Proceeds go to charities, school events, and towards the Special Education classroom.
  - With spring approaching, we will be focusing on the life cycles of plants and animals. This includes growing plants in the classroom, but also tending to a live butterfly kit to learn about the butterfly life cycle, and hatching our own praying mantis eggs!
  - Finally, we celebrated World Down Syndrome Day on March 21 by showcasing one of our student's artwork in our main atrium. A display was created featuring several of her pieces, along with posters informing viewers of the gallery about Down Syndrome and encouraging them to "see the ability".
- **Susy Walsh**
    - The Empower program often referenced is being offered at many different schools. The growth in our students is being noted. An opportunity to trial virtual Empower between two schools, Loretto Catholic and St. Joseph CES (S) has occurred with success. Thank you to the staff of Loretto Catholic for their continued commitment to all Niagara Catholic Students.
  - **Jim DiGioia, Coordinator of Student Support gave presentation**
    - Submitted by Jim Di Gioia, Danny Giancola, David O'Rourke, Student Support Coordinators

#### **Niagara Catholic Rocks with Mendelt**

Mendelt Hoekstra is a Music Therapist in the Niagara Region specializing in the support of young adults who live with a disability. He is the originator, executive and artistic director of the Momentum Choir and has worked with various schools within Niagara Catholic providing music sessions as a tool to engage our most vulnerable students in developing listening skills, social skills, self-regulation, expressive communication, and decision-making.

Student Support is providing an opportunity for each of Niagara Catholic's Secondary Special Education classrooms to participate in 19 weekly virtual Niagara Catholic ROCKS with Mendelt! Sessions for Semester 2. Weekly sessions the week of February 7th and they will continue through to the end of the school year.

#### **SOAR Secondary and Post- Secondary Programs**

The Student Support Department and the Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region (LDANR) have collaborated to offer a grade seven and eight Virtual Spring Learning Transition Program. The SOAR Secondary program will support students with a focus on preparation and transition to secondary education. As well, Student Support Department and LDANR are also offering a SOAR Virtual Spring Learning Transition Program for students in Grs. 11 and 12 who are transitioning to post-secondary

education next year.

#### **Youth Wellness Hub Niagara**

Niagara Catholic would once again like to extend our thanks to the Youth Wellness Hub Niagara who provided funding for Psycho-educational assessments for students. These additional assessments has allowed us to decrease our wait list for these assessments but more importantly has provided important information to the learning profile of the student. Our sincerest thanks to the Youth Wellness Hub of Niagara for supporting our students here in Niagara Catholic.

#### **LEXIA - Upcoming Professional Development**

Student Support has arranged our final professional learning sessions for Lexia Learning in April. As you may recall, Lexia is a tier 2 reading program for students who need further support in the area of literacy. The final sessions for this year will focus on Lexia data collection and how this information will drive pedagogical practice moving forward. Principals, Vice-Principals, ERTs and classroom teachers are invited to participate. It has been a very successful year of Lexia implementation in Niagara Catholic. We are looking forward to continuing this work in our next school year.

#### **K1 Transition Students**

The Student Support Team has begun its work with supporting families and students who will be entering year 1 Kindergarten. Daycare and Preschool observations are underway and transition meetings and preparations for the first day of school will quickly follow. We thank all the principals, vice-principals, school staff and partnering agencies for supporting our transition process. We look forward to having our new students join the Niagara Catholic family.

**F. TRUSTEE REPORTS – Trustee Burtnik**

- We were one of the first boards in the province to meet the requirement by the Ministry to have a protocol on sex trafficking.
- It's the first step in educating both our staff and students and the broader community to be able to speak about this topic.
- We received the news about the GSN funding and look forward to building the budget around that.
- Next biggest change that is coming is to our board by-laws. We are recommending the removal of a set policy committee and incorporating that into the Committee of the Whole which should be able to streamline conversations and policy changes and get more trustee participation in the policy conversations.

**G. STUDENT REPORT – Serena Butera**

- Currently working on putting on our in person symposium which will be held on April 28, 2022 at Club Roma. The objective of the symposium is to say farewell to our leaving Senate and introduce our new Senate and the same with Student Councils.
- Working very closely with Andrea Bozza, our Mental Health Lead. Catholic education week is coming up and we are working to make it a mental health week as well by providing in classroom videos for secondary students as well as on our social media and resources sent out in a memo to all secondary principals throughout the board.
- Saint Paul High School raised \$471 for Autism Ontario through a bake sale.

**H. NCPIC REPORT**

**NIL Report**

**I. NOTICES OF MOTION**

Moved by Lorraine Smith

Seconded by Co-Chair Somma

***THAT THE Special Education Advisory Committee Chair & Vice-Chair prepare a letter to send to the parent via Superintendent Pizzoferrato regarding the acknowledgment of their letter and that it was presented at the SEAC table.***

**CARRIED**

**J. INFORMATION ITEMS**

- SEAC goals for May – google form. Present two or three goals that you think would be worthwhile for SEAC to look at.

**K. MOMENT OF SILENCE / REFLECTION OF LIFE**

Chair Cipriano offered a moment of silence and reflection.

**L. NEXT MEETING**

**Wednesday, May 4, 2022 at 6:30 pm - Hybrid**

**M. ADJOURNMENT**

- Moved by Lorraine Smith
- Seconded by Rita Smith

**THAT** the **April 6, 2022** meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee be adjourned.

**CARRIED**

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm.