



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2022

6:30 PM

Virtual Meeting in Compliance with Education Act Section 207 and
Ontario Regulation 463/97 Section 5.1 (2)

PUBLIC ACCESS LIVE STREAM LINK

<https://niagaracatholic.ca/meetings-livestream/>

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Land Acknowledgement

Introduction:

The Niagara Catholic District School Board wishes to honour the Indigenous people who have been the protectors of this land, known as Turtle Island, for more than ten thousand years.

We begin this meeting by acknowledging the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people.

2. Opening Prayer

Monique Somma provided the opening prayer

3. Roll Call

October 5, 2022

Members	Affiliations	Yes	Excused
Cipriano, Camillo	Director of Education		X
Pizzoferrato, Gino	Superintendent of Education	x	
Glencross, Emily	Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region	x	
Maxwell, Michelle	Niagara Children's Centre	x	
Kelly, Tara	Pathstone Mental Health	x	
Palombo, Pina	Down Syndrome Niagara	x	
Attree, Alexandria	Autism Ontario Niagara Region	x	
Shawanoo, Willow	Indigenous Representative		X
Smith, Lorraine	Mainstream	x	
Smith, Rita	Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet)	x	
Somma, Monique	Co-Chair - Community Living (Welland/Pelham)	x	
Burtnik, Kathy	• Trustee of the Board	x	
Sicoli, Dino	• Trustee of the Board	x	

Mackenzie Agretto	• <i>Student Senate Representative</i>		X
Filice, Adele	• <i>Principal, Secondary</i>		X
Walsh, Susy	• <i>Principal, Elementary</i>	x	
Di Gioia, Jim	Coordinator of Student Support		X
Giancola, Danny	Coordinator of Student Support	x	
Di Toro, Anthony	Coordinator of Student Support		X
Mancuso, Anthony	Behaviour Resource Teacher	x	
Davies, Elizabeth	Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary	x	

4. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Emily Glencross

Seconded by Alexandria Attree

5. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No disclosure of interest were declared with any items on the agenda

6. Approval of Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of June 1, 2022

Moved by Lorraine Smith

Seconded by Michelle Maxwell

7. Meeting of September 7, 2022 Information Session only (no quorum)

B. PRESENTATION

1. Ready, Willing & Able Presentation – Natalie Bianco

C. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Early Vote: Chair/Co-Chair (Gino)

Monique has accepted nomination as chair. No others were offered

Pleased to acclaim Monique Somma

Monique Somma nominated Community Member – Christine Donato. Christine was a student in Hamilton Catholic within the inclusive education model. She holds a masters degree in Child and Youth Studies from Brock University as well as a diploma in Early Childhood Education. She has an extensive background in assistive technology and lives with a physical disability and a communication impairment. She offers a unique personal perspective as well as a wealth of knowledge to our current SEAC.

Chairperson Burtnick – Do we recommend to the Board? Gino recommends that SEAC brings community member forward to Board. Monique Somma & Alexandria Attree both support 7 votes in favour – unanimous

Superintendent Gino - Still working through identifying our indigenous member. Pat Rocca & Brian Khon through IAC will be recommending to SEAC.

Structure of SEAC is shifting – currently have 7 community members, we can have 10. We are in the process of identifying new community members.

2. Discussion of Agency SEAC goals for 2022/2023 school year (Monique/Gino)

Last spring we brainstormed 2 goals shown on document. 2 sub committees were set up.

Monique will send as google doc so each member can sign up for one of the goals. Monique will circulate through google docs for members to sign up. Improve transitions for all students and

better improve access and services.

GINO – We want people to register where they are most interested. You aren't restricted to commenting on the other goal.

MONIQUE – Any questions? We are excited to get working on it.

3. Committee Membership (Gino)

Structure of the committee is shifting. We currently have 7 community partner members. We can have up to 10. We are in the process of identifying new community members.

We have also included student support member representing the different areas of Special Ed. Speech Pathologist, Student Support Facilitator, Behaviour Analyst, Behaviour Resource Teacher, and Teacher of the Blind/Low Vision. It's a good opportunity for live feedback and available as resource for SEAC. They will be referred to as observers & a liaison resource to the committee if required.

4. SEAC Sub-Committee Overview (Gino)

Consider dividing committee among the goals (1/2 goal #1/ 1/2 goal #2)

- a. Communications
- b. Survey – **GINO** – will bring an update at the next meeting. Working with ethics committee to get confirmation to move forward.
- c. Ministry Reports – **GINO** – This is a way to bring in new initiatives from Ministry. Will continue to maintain regular reporting structure and updates.
- d. Policy – **MONIQUE** – Last year we accepted feedback from everyone. Would like to continue to do it this way.

GINO – I appreciate digital approach to make it available. We may discuss report for our awareness then forward to review parties as submission from SEAC.

5. SEAC Brochure (Gino)

GINO – We have received feedback from most committee members. If you have not responded to accuracy of contact information please email Gino/Elizabeth.

D.AGENCY REPORTS

Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – Emily Glencross

Fall programs are starting up this month. We still have some spots available ex. Sole Secondary (transition to high school).

Y to Youth Support Group – for all high school students with learning disabilities. Enrollment can take place anytime during the year. They run from month to month. These programs require assessments so are more demanding.

It is Learning Disability Awareness Month – October. Check out the facebook page.

Niagara Children's Centre – Michelle Maxwell

No report.

Pathstone Mental Health – Tara Kelly

Ongoing construction of new river house location in Welland. Currently exploring a new model of intake in partnership with Contact Niagara. All programs are running and busy.

Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Alexandria Attree

Currently going through policy program memorandum for provision for Health Support Services in school setting, completing a draft consultation and connecting high functioning children with the program. Connecting children with high functioning autism with ABA

Mainstream – Lorraine Smith

Pleased to announce that Joyce Fretz was recently hired as the new Director of Programs. We look forward to working with Joyce to continue the journey of moving Mainstream forward. We are also in the process of hiring a *new Executive Director for Mainstream and Gateway as John is retiring.*

Amalgamation with gateway is still being discussed.

Options Niagara Program is still in the planning stages of organizing Pathways to Success (resource fair for people we support). Hopefully to be held at the Pen Centre. The date will be announced at a later date. Several information sessions with the focus being on the power of attorney and guardianships for families are being planned.

Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet) – Rita Smith

No report

Down Syndrome Niagara – Pina Polombo

October is Down Syndrome Awareness Month.

We recently had our annual Friendship Walk (previously called “Buddy Walk”). Held on Sunday, September 25, 2022 at Heartland Forest.

Our partner group Homies with Chromies are taking a group of our DS individuals to the Medieval Times Dinner and Theatre Show on Saturday, October 22, 2022. The event is free and is totally funded by the Homies with Chromies Association for all individuals with Down Syndrome of all ages.

Our annual Halloween Down Syndrome Dance will be in person this year on Saturday, October 29 at 3:30 p.m. at St Andrew’s United Church in Niagara Falls.

Morgan Cooper has accepted the position as the alternate designate for Down Syndrome Niagara (DSN) SEAC group.

Our next DSN meeting is T.B.A.

E.STAFF REPORTS**Superintendent of Education – Gino**

Spec Ed pleased to report increase in enrollment has brought an increase in needs. We have topped up EA deployment in the system to support those needs. We have added an additional 21 EAs and more are on the radar. I credit Principals, staff, and EA’s for putting processes in place to build success and working with us. We are monitoring the situation and looking for other means of support as well. We are working with FACS Niagara updating the FACS protocol. Was provided in draft to our school principals in August. We are enhancing a new approach and struck a Liaison Committee comprised of Administrators from Niagara Catholic and Executive Staff from FACS. We have a plan on how we will gather live data and meet regularly to discuss how we can improve it and develop a final version of protocol. Linda Filbert is excited for FACS and Niagara Catholic to develop Walk the Path together. The mandate is to be partners on the journey – share the learning & prioritize.

We also have Teams of central staff & principals working together to provide a Centre of Excellence - Opportunities to integrate students into same grade classrooms. You will hear more about this over time as we start to gather information on the success of this model.

Elementary Principal - Suzy

Staff from elementary and secondary schools are very excited that SNAP is back. Schools are sending students to experience in special ways dance, movement, joy, physical activity and fun. Hoping to get student testaments soon.

SEAC – Danny

Student Support is offering a series of topic specific information sessions throughout this school year and starting now. These sessions have been scheduled in a virtual format to maximize staff participation. Our first sessions focused on orienteering our new Educational Resource Teachers on process, best practice, forms and programs. Our Program Resource Teachers hosted this session. An introduction and review of the Kindergarten Speech Language Pathology Referral Process and Kindergarten screening tool was hosted by our Speech and Language Pathologists. The Mental Health Referral process and programs sessions has been hosted by our Mental Health Lead. Our upcoming session on Standardized Special Education Assessments will be hosted once again by our Program Resource Teachers. Finally, our last session for this initial roll-out will be hosted by our Behaviour Resource Teachers on our new Integrated Behaviour Model: Quick Tips and Strategies for De-escalation. Thank you to our Student Support Staff who organized and delivered these sessions.

A workshop to support staff who are working with deaf or hard of hearing students has been offered through our Itinerant Program Resource Teachers. The workshop took place on Oct. 4 with two virtual sessions offered in the morning and afternoon. Amy King and Kristi Stano, Resource Services-Outreach Programs from our Provincial School partners also supported the delivery of this information to Niagara Catholic staff. The workshop focused on hearing loss, interpreting audiograms, FM Systems in the classroom, well-being, academic and social implications of a student's hearing loss in the classroom and supporting students with a hearing loss in a virtual format. Thank you to our IPRTs for organizing the day and to all Niagara Catholic staff who attending this workshop.

Student Support will continue to provide an opportunity for each of Niagara Catholic's secondary Special Education classrooms to participate in 35 weekly virtual Niagara Catholic ROCKS with Mendelt sessions for this school year. Mendelt Hoekstra is a Music Therapist executive and artistic director of the Momentum Choir. The first sessions took place the week of Sept. 27. The students are having a wonderful time in the program. Thank you to our Student Support Facilitators for supporting this initiative.

Student Support is recognizing Learning Disabilities Awareness for the month of October. A memo has been shared with the system highlighting important information that can be found on the LDAO website and our local chapter of LDANR.

SNAP is back. Supporting Neurodiversity through Adaptive Programming is once again in-person this school year. S.N.A.P. is set up for individuals experiencing disability and provides them with unique movement experiences. The program includes a wide range of activities such as educational gymnastics, dance and movement education, games, and other activities of daily living. Activities can be modified to meet the needs and capabilities of the individual participating.

All schools in Niagara Catholic will have a chance to send students to this program. We thank the Brock SNAP staff for making this opportunity possible.

The Niagara Catholic Learning Centres of Excellence Programs are in progress. Student Support Staff are working with school staff to identify appropriate candidates for the program. Students who are identified for the program are those with a Learning Disability, Mild Intellectual Disability or Language Impairment. The LCE Program aims to provide targeted and intensive instruction to improve students' overall ability level. Our next step is to meet with families to discuss possible placement. Our target date for student entry into the program is Nov. 1.

Niagara Catholic is on to phase two of the Empower Literacy Program implementation. School staff are currently screening and selecting student candidates for the program. A data collection process has been established to help track progress, success and challenges that may arise. The program is scheduled to begin with students either before or soon after October 10th.

Monique - Q: – Last point what is the scope of the Center of Excellence.

Danny - A: Language impairment, disability, kids that struggle but need intensive targeted instruction – target their learning goals in their IEP.

Monique - Q – What is the trajectory of students having access to this program? Duration, intervention, forever?

Danny - A – No timeframe is set. Kids are idea for an exceptionality. We want to monitor progress and evaluate learning goals. This takes time. Un-officially we like them to stay in for 1 year but it can extend it into year 2 & 3. We explain to parents it is an open discussion on how their experience is going. We need to determine if we have met their goals to get them back into their home program.

F. TRUSTEE REPORTS - Trustee Burtick

Exceptional positive reopening with higher enrolment then estimated. Gino down played responsiveness of his team and how they met those challenges. Well planned response to children in our schools. Cudos to you and your team that make Niagara Catholic is very proud.

Awesome report at CW meeting on Summer Learning Program. It again shows how quickly our staff can respond to our challenge and the follow up to track that success from a very deliberate learning opportunity. Speaks really well to the commitment of our staff.

On a financial side the Board is in great shape. Revised estimates will be out in October. And audited financials come to the Board in November.

Lots to complain about in this world but none of us should complain about the staff.

G. STUDENT REPORT

H. NCPIC REPORT

I. NOTICES OF MOTION

J. INFORMATION ITEMS

K. MOMENT OF SILENCE / REFLECTION OF LIFE – MONIQUE

Re-read prayer from at the beginning for those who didn't hear.

Saint Maria Fostana Day – had vision of creating Divine Mercy Painting. Kept journal and wrote about her conversations with God. Prayer to be merciful – fitting for the work that we do.

L. NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, November 2, 2022 at 6:30pm

M. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn – Lorraine Smith

Seconded - Emily Glencross