



**MINUTES OF THE  
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 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 – Chairperson – M. Somma**

*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**

Chair Somma provided the opening prayer – Follow the Joy – Reflective Retreat

**3. Roll Call**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Affiliations</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Excused</b>
Somma, Monique	Community Living (Welland/Pelham) - CHAIR	X	
Glencross, Emily	Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region	X	
Maxwell, Michelle	Niagara Children’s Centre	X	
Kelly, Tara	Pathstone Mental Health	X	
Flander, Doris (for Pina Palombo)	Down Syndrome Niagara (President)	X	

Attree, Alexandria	Autism Ontario Niagara Region		X
T.B.D.	Indigenous Representative		X
Smith, Lorraine	Mainstream	X	
Wencel, Sara (for Rita Smith)	Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet)	X	
Marino, Jim	Trustee of the Board	X	
Joyner, Doug	Trustee of the Board	X	
Filice, Adele	Principal, Secondary		X
Walsh, Susy	Principal, Elementary	X	
Pizzoferrato, Gino	Superintendent of Education	X	
Agretto, Mackenzie	Student Senate Representative	X	
Di Gioia, Jim	Coordinator of Student Support	X	
Giancola, Danny	Coordinator of Student Support	X	
Di Toro, Anthony	Coordinator of Student Support	X	

Observers	Affiliations	Yes	Excused
Harrington, Kavitha	Speech-Language Pathologist	x	
Brochu, Grace	Student Support Facilitator	x	
De Lisio, Angela	Behaviour Analyst	x	
Mancuso, Vincent	Behaviour Resource Teacher	x	
Formisano, Tara (for Vanderlee, Carole)	Teacher of the Blind/Low Vision	x	
Barrick, Tania	Program Resource Teacher	x	
Davies, Elizabeth	Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary	x	

**4. Approval of the Agenda**

**Moved by:** Chair M. Somma

**Seconded by:** Michelle Maxwell

**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 October 5, 2022**

**Moved by:** Lorraine Smith

**Seconded by:** Emily Glencross

**B. PRESENTATION**

N/A

**C. AGENDA ITEMS**

**1. Introduction of new Student Senate Representative (Mackenzie Agretto) & New Trustees (Doug**

**Joyner & Jim Marino)** Chair M. Somma

Biographies attached

- 2. **Letter from Durham District School Board – Chair Somma**  
 There was discussion around supporting DDSB letter regarding Special Incidence Portion Claim Funding. It was agreed that we need to do more research regarding the change in funding structure for student needs. Link for details on funding distribution:

[https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Memos/B2018/B14\\_EN.pdf](https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Memos/B2018/B14_EN.pdf)

- 3. **SEAC Chair’s Report (Chair Somma)**  
 - Discussion of Agency SEAC goals for 2022/2023 school year

**Agency SEAC Goals for 2022-23 School Year**

<b>GOAL # 1</b> Improve transitions for all students (into school for the first time, from elementary to secondary, from secondary to post-secondary and beyond, integrated transition plan).	
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBER and email address</b>	<b>AGENCY</b>
Monique Somma msomm@brocku.ca	Community Living Welland/Pelham
Emily Glencross; <a href="mailto:eglencross@ldaniagaara.org">eglencross@ldaniagaara.org</a>	Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region (LDANR)
Tara Kelly (tkelly@pathstone.ca)	Pathstone Mental Health
Alexandria Attree Alexandria.Attree@gmail.com	Autism Ontario
Adele Filice	Secondary Principal
<b>Action Items (meeting 12-05)</b>	
1. Establish a consistent process of how we communicate information to parents and between schools- processes for documentation and resource for sharing information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Create a checklist for all grade 8 teachers to gather information- what information can we gather?(privacy)</li> <li>b. Pamphlets that include info gathered from existing for various transitions (into Niagara Catholic, from 8-9)</li> <li>c. Send out transition document with IEP, information sheet about what the transition plan is</li> </ul>	

- Create guides for educators to know what to send out for transitions at various grade levels.
- elicit feedback from families to help support development of transition goals to meet student needs.
- d. Info session: Transition for parents including agency representatives. Evening session at various schools throughout the board- each region. - three sessions with 20 min info session (into school, 8-9 and after school)
- e. Grade 7 and 8 teachers to be part of training/learning about transition from elementary to secondary. -perhaps- specific in-service for intermediate teachers about what secondary options are available in secondary. -has to be a secondary rep to speak about it. -teachers should go to the schools to have the hands on experience.

**Goal # 2**  
 Improve/promote access to and knowledge of services outside of the school board and organizations including paraprofessionals and government funding options.

<b>COMMITTEE MEMBER</b>	<b>AGENCY</b>
Susy Walsh	Elementary Principal
Lorraine Smith <a href="mailto:lsmith@mainstreamservices.com">lsmith@mainstreamservices.com</a>	Mainstream
Monique Somma	Community Living Welland/Pelham
Michelle Maxwell	Niagara Children’s Centre
Rita Smith	CL Port Colborne

**Action items:**  
 1: Share information about agencies:

- a. SEAC spotlight for each agency- one agency per month in school newsletter (What the agency is? What services they provide? etc..) Could also be posted under a banner (**community resources**) on the NCDSB website. Even could be posted monthly on school/board social media (Facebook page)- we could develop a template for the information to be presented in the same way. Ensure info gets sent to schools for the first of the month for newsletters.
- Opportunity to share info that NPCC is a designated Smart Start Hub for families/  
 Contact Niagara/211

b. Take agency information (especially programs and services) and create a pamphlet, booklet for educators to have as a resource (could be printed and/or electronic)

2: Funding options available:

a. Info session: could piggy back on the transition info sessions and provide funding specific information for families.

-Pathways to success - Mainstream information fair

Ensure this is information to bridge the gap between children services and adult services.

-Bethesda- transition workshops provided for students in grade 8 and 12-

Alison/Melissa

#### **4. SEAC Sub-Committee Overview (Chair Somma)**

- a. Communications – The brochure is in the process of getting printed to be distributed to schools hardcopy and electronic. Gino’s team is discussing the best way to share this information with families/
- b. Survey – Danny to reach out to Christine, who will be putting the survey into Qualtrics. The survey needs to be re-examined to ensure it aligns with the desired outcomes and the needs of the board. If anyone is interested in reviewing the current survey for any minor changes that need to made, reach out to Monique, Liz or Danny (to get connected with Danny)
- c. Ministry Reports - n/a
- d. Policy - One coming soon

#### **D. AGENCY REPORTS**

##### **Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – Emily Glencross**

Winter program applications opened last Monday. Received a great deal of academic programs – literacy & math programs are full at this time. We encourage families to still apply because sometimes spots open up. Spots are available in our SOAR Secondary (transition to high school program), B.E.S.T. (social and emotional skills program, grade 3 – 5), and in our Youth-to-Youth Support Group (for students ages 13 – 18). Please see out winter flyer program attached. We will share information on post-secondary workshops in the new year.

##### **Niagara Children’s Centre – Michelle Maxwell**

Smart Hub is rolling out officially January 2023. Niagara Catholic has been invited to an information session.

**Pathstone Mental Health – Tara Kelly**

Opened 10<sup>th</sup> walk in site opened at Pen Centre. Looking at the need moving forward.

**Down Syndrome Niagara – Pina Palumbo (DORIS)**

n/a

**Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Alexandria Attree**

n/a

**Mainstream – Lorraine Smith**

Save the Date flyer – upcoming Pathways to Success May 25 2023 at Seaway Mall

**Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet) – Sara Wencel**

n/a

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

n/a

**STAFF REPORTS**

**Secondary Principal – Adele**

No update

**Elementary Principal – Susy**

No update

**Student Support Department – Danny**

1. SNAP

Niagara Catholic is looking forward to the Winter SNAP (Supporting Neurodiversity through Adaptive Programming) sessions offered through Brock University. 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. The second half of our schools will have a chance to register with their visit date being sometime during these next few months.

2. Mendelt Music Sessions

Continue in our secondary schools for students in our Special Education Classrooms. Students are having a wonderful time participating in these virtual and interactive sessions. Niagara Catholic thanks Mendelt for providing this program for our students.

3. Empower Day 3 Training for new Staff

24 Niagara Catholic Educational Resource Teachers completed day 3 of in-person Empower Training on Dec. 6. Empower staff from Sick Kids Hospital were in-person at the CEC to offer this next phase of training. These new Empower trained staff will be asked to complete one more day of training in the new year.

4. Transition to School Parent Information Sessions

Coordinators are participating in these sessions in partnership with the Niagara Childcare Centre

to help support students and families who are transitioning to year 1 Kindergarten for September of 2023. A session was held this past Tuesday with two additional sessions to take place on Dec. 13 and Jan. 12. Student Support staff looks forward to meeting families and assisting students with their transition to school.

**TRUSTEE REPORTS – Trustee Marino**

We are very privileged with our partnerships. I am very impressed with our supporting agencies and the relationship we have with them. It's an extraordinary team effort.

**STUDENT REPORT – Mackenzie**

Student Senate – We are planning the Time to Shine Formal for Special Education classes at St Paul on February 24, 2023. Sending out letters next week to all special education teachers next week. We are also working on getting Therapy dogs as well as starting to plan other events throughout the year, after our formal kick-off event.

**NCPIC REPORT**

From meeting of November 3, 2022

Director Cipriano was present and addressed the NCPIC about the current labour situation with CUPE and thanked parents for their on-going support of Niagara Catholic.

- Superintendent Forsyth-Sells welcomed the new and returning members to the NCPIC, and thanked the members that would not be returning for their commitment, dedication and support of Catholic education, parent engagement and student achievement and well-being in the Niagara Catholic District School Board.
- Fr. Paul MacNeil presided over the commissioning ceremony of the members of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee as they publicly proclaimed their commitment to promote the Mission of Catholic education and the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board.
- Brenda Annen and Carrie Vernelli were elected as the Co-Chairs of the NCPIC for a term of two years.
- Ian Woods was acclaimed as the Niagara Catholic Ontario Association for Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE) Regional Director.
- The By-Laws of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee were reviewed and were approved as presented.
- Superintendent Forsyth-Sells provided a report on behalf of the SEAC.
- Fr. Paul MacNeil reported that the diocesan report of the Synod has been published and made available. In the report, 10 themes that emerged from the listening sessions were identified:
  - Quelling fear and judgement
  - Pastor/Bishop as leader and shepherd
  - Improving Collaboration and Promoting the Laity (especially women) in Leadership
  - Improving Communication
  - Need for Healing
  - Creating Parish Cultures of Welcome and Belonging
  - Providing Opportunities for Evangelization, Catechesis and Discipleship

- Strengthening School - Parish Partnerships
- Outreach and Ministry to Youth, Young Adults and Families
- Bridging Division

Fr. Paul also reported that Bishop Bergie has mandated that every parish create and implement a parish pastoral council and diocesan lay pastoral council to help involve the laity in leadership and diocesan decision making.

**E. NOTICES OF MOTION**

None

**F. INFORMATION ITEMS**

None

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

**H. NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday, January 11, 2022 at 6:30 pm in person

**I. ADJOURNMENT 7:48 pm**

**Motion to adjourn:** Chair M. Somma

**Seconded:** Lorraine Smith