



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

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2023
 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 – Chair 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

3. Roll Call

Members	Affiliations	Yes	Excused
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	
Cooper, Morgan (Palombo, Pina)	Down Syndrome Niagara (President)	x	
Attree, Alexandria	Autism Ontario Niagara Region		x

T.B.D.	Indigenous Representative		
Smith, Lorraine	Mainstream	x	
Wencel, Sara (for Rita Smith)	Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet)	x	
Wilson, Alison	Bethesda		x
Donato, Krystine	Community Member	x	
Joyner, Doug	Trustee of the Board	x	
Marino, Jim	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
Keighan, Kelly	Speech-Language Pathologist	x	
Brochu, Grace	Student Support Facilitator	x	
De Lisio, Angela	Behaviour Analyst	x	
Mancuso, Vincent	Behaviour Resource Teacher	x	
Bailey, Babette	Teacher of the Blind/Low Vision	x	
Davies, Elizabeth	Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary	x	

4. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: L. Smith

Seconded by: K. Donato

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 January 11, 2023

Moved by: E. Glencross

Seconded by: Trustee Joyner

B. PRESENTATION - Nick Smith (presentation attached)

Niagara Support Services (NSS) - Niagara Training and Employment Agency (NTEC)

- NTEC Regional Respite program: Last resort weekend respite program for children with a

- wide variety of disabilities
- NSS Children's Autism Program (CAP): Education, Community Partnership Program (ECCP) for primary/junior aged students with autism
- NSS Consultant Services program

C. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Letter from Durham District School Board – Chair Somma

Superintendent Pizzoferrato informed the discussion that letters are often received for information and a response letter is not always required, in our case, the letter prompted a review of internal processes which has enhanced our effort to review the internal application process.

As a committee SEAC has decided to receive the letter for information.

Moved by: Trustee Joyner

Seconded by: Trustee Marino

2. SEAC Chair's Report (Chair Somma)

1. I will be sending invitations to meetings soon to discuss the SEAC goals and come up with plans to bring to the March meeting in order to begin the work moving into the spring and into the fall.

2. If you think there would be a presentation that would be good to bring to our SEAC, please let me know as we plan the rest of our meetings this school year and into the fall.

3. New members- we are excited to be able to submit two new referrals to the board and are keen to continue to fill the open spots (now two plus one indigenous representative) on our committee.

4. Remember you can access the monthly reporting form to ask any questions or provide any updates for the monthly meeting from your organization. If you have a question or an item to discuss at SEAC, you can include these on the form as well.

<https://forms.gle/CLQpAnCUMaJGEfjB7>

5. Co-chair- currently there is no co-chair. Normally, this would be voted on in January but because we have had a large turnover of members, I put this on hold. I would like to invite anyone interested in a co-chair role to please reach out to me if you would like more information about what the role entails, I would be happy to discuss. Basically, a co-chair would support the agenda in an agreed capacity, collaborate with the chair and Gino/Liz on agenda items and fill in for the chair in their absence.

3. SEAC Sub-Committee Overview (Chair Somma)

We have single representatives not committees.

SEAC sub-committees (communications, survey, Ministry Reports & Policy) are tabled for now as we have 2 different committees and the survey is going out soon. We will revisit at a later date. A new committee list will be sent out as we have two new SEAC members.

D. AGENCY REPORTS

Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – Emily Glencross

Nothing new this month. Summer camp applications are opening towards end of the month. We have had a busy start to the new year with our winter programs.

Niagara Children's Centre – Michelle Maxwell

New website has launched. Eligibility and forms are posted and linked on the website. Smart Start Hub officially launched in January. Portal not yet gone live but forms and information are there to start a referral.

Smart Start Hubs - Official launch of satellite hubs in Grimsby, Welland & Fort Erie. An official launch with new partners will be held in Welland and Grimsby.

Pathstone Mental Health – Tara Kelly

10th walk in site permanently located at the Pen Centre – Mondays (10:30 to 7:30) & Fridays (10:30 to 6:30) Started first week of January.

Big Brother/Sisters operate on site Monday and Friday as well.

River Road (Welland) site will hopefully be completed in next couple of months. John Howard walk in clinic will be moving, as well as some clinics, counselling and therapy services.

Down Syndrome Niagara – Pina Palombo (Doris)

Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Alexandria Attree (read by Chair Somma)

NCPIC (NIAGARA PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE)

We met January 12th, next meeting will be March 2nd @ 6:30 pm

Our presentation was on Decodable books. We discussed how it is being introduced to primary first and will work its way up the grades. This is a wonderful way to help avoid the stigma of level readers amongst peers. I recommend having the presentation for our SEAC committee in the future as I feel this is relatable.

We discussed creating our new faith formation committees for 2023 & goals committee for 2023. I always welcome and encourage parents to come out to these meetings as they are filled with a wealth of knowledge and updates on board-related activities that help our students thrive.

Autism Ontario:

We are encouraged to learn about how SEAC works both provincially and at our own school boards. We are continuing to work towards having our Autism Ontario SEAC information streamlined into 1 monthly report.

Autism Niagara:

We have a whole host of great events from sensory and swimming to social clubs. I encourage you to check out the Autism Ontario website and look at what's happening in SOUTH REGION (this is what Niagara is under)

Mainstream – Lorraine Smith (pamphlet attached)

Pathways pamphlets are available for pick-up on your way out.

Date: May 25 at Seaway Mall 1 pm to 7 pm

Access to families & community members. I can forward more information if you are

interested in attending or being a vendor. We have so many families who attend this event. It is one stop shopping. So many are not aware of resources available. Hope to see a lot of you there. (pamphlet attached)

Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet) – Sara Wencel

No update

Community Living (Welland/Pelham) – Monique Somma

This year CLWP is celebrating 50 year of support for people with disabilities. There are several plans in the works for celebrations in the spring or fall. There are many artifacts that have been collected over the 1/2 century that we would like to display for community members to see the progression over time. It is hoped these events will take place in May to coincide with Community Living Month. More information to come.

E. STUDENT REPORT - Student Senate Representative – Mackenzie (poster attached)

Time to Shine - Teachers had concerns about weather and some room issues at St Paul. The date of the Time to Shine Formal had to be moved from January 24th, 2023 to April 18th, 2023.

This was due to the heat being broken in the Saint Paul's Special Ed Class and students being unable to access the sensory room or changing tables. Teachers will be updated of the change of date. The posters for the formal have been finalized and will be shared with the group.

F. STAFF REPORTS

Secondary Principal – Adele

Students with special needs were in the building over the exams as programming continued for them. We are all looking forward to a semester 2 start.

Elementary Principal – Susy

Kids Helping Kids for 2 weeks. Schools are busy planning fun filled activities for our students. School Calendars – crazy hair, crazy funky socks, PJ day, Western Days, Dance a thon, etc...Some schools inviting the Children's Centre to come in and speak to them.

Student Support Department – Anthony

OAP (Ontario Autism Program): Information was shared with families at the Transition to School event hosted by the Niagara Children's Centre (NCC) in January. Information about the OAP was distributed to Principals to share with families about accessing the OAP from our ABA (Applied Behaviour Analysis) Team.

Entry to School: Information sharing for kindergarten students is in process in collaboration with all our community organizations to inform Student Support Coordinators and Student Support Teams about our new kindergarten students joining us in September 2023.

Lexia - Phase 2 Elementary: The Program Resource Teacher Team is in the process of meeting with Elementary School Staff to review student progress. Three additional licenses are being assigned to Elementary Schools further increasing access to the Lexia ("Lexia® Core5® Reading is an adaptive blended learning program that **accelerates the**

development of literacy skills for students of all abilities, helping them make that critical shift from learning to read to reading to learn").

Lexia - Phase 1 Secondary Roll Out: Meetings have been held with all the high schools; license distribution numbers have been communicated. Implementation models will vary based on site and currently in process to begin for Semester 2 (Feb).

Down Syndrome Group with Linda Moroz (Bethesda: Behaviour Therapist):

Bethesda/Linda is offering a 4-week session for parents of children with Down Syndrome ranging in ages 2 – 12 beginning in February. Area Student Support Facilitator's will identify schools with students meeting this criterion. Principals of identified schools will be able to invite parents to participate.

"I Am a Child of God" - The Behaviour Resource Teacher Team is proud to indicate that they are continuing to deliver their Social-Emotional Learning framework presentations entitled "I Am A Child of God" to several grades and classrooms this year. We are proud to note that over 100 classrooms have already benefitted from accessing this program that is supported by years of research-based work in the framework of self-regulation tools for students.

Special Education Plan Update: We are at the time of year when the department will review and update the Special Education Plan for 2022-23, which includes engaging with SEAC for feedback and a recommendation for Trustees to accept and endorse the plan prior to the close of the school year. Jim Di Gioia will share details about the Plan, the legislation around it, and review the changes for this year at an upcoming SEAC. Members can view the current plan on the board website, [linked here](#).

Superintendent Pizzoferrato – I am pleased to welcome Babette Bailey & Kelly Keighan, new members to SEAC from Student Support. Welcome.

I had an opportunity today to visit Niagara Children's Centre (NCC) with Jim Di Gioia. We are embarking on a new partnership with NCC with a committed OT providing support on site at the school. We are excited to be part of the roll-out. The school is being identified. Any partnership with Niagara Children's Centre would be a fruitful one. We are hopeful for an April start at the latest.

All Access Event - Tuesday, April 18, 2023: Holiday Inn, Ontario Street St. Catharines. Intent of the day and more details are forthcoming. We are planning for student representation from all of our schools. An opportunity to be part of a series of experiences so they understand what it feels like to have challenges. Each committee member is contributing. The evening experience is to provide families/parents the same opportunity as the students do during the day. We expect approximately 300 students to be involved.

G. TRUSTEE REPORTS – Trustee Joyner/Trustee Marino

Trustee Joyner – At the Board meeting last night, we talked about Director’s annual report 2022. Could Superintendent Pizzoferrato get a copy for everyone on SEAC? There is also a video to go along with report. It was very well done and truly represents Catholic Education at Niagara. Can the video be shared at March SEAC meeting?

Trustee Marino – I would like to put in a plug for the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education’s annual gala with honorary guest Bishop Gerard Bergie scheduled for Friday, March 3 at Club Roma. The annual fundraiser in support of the foundation’s outreach program in support of students in need and scholarships brings together a cross section of the Niagara Region including members of the clergy, politicians, parents, students community group and business representatives. There is pre dinner wine tasting, a delicious pre dinner anti pasta assortment and then outstanding cuisine that Club Roma is well known for.

Throughout the evening, students from Notre Dame Secondary School will be offering musical presentations. Those who attend not only enjoy fine food and fellowship but also leave with a good feeling knowing that they are supporting a good cause. There are flyers with ticket purchase information available on the nearby table, please pick one up and your consideration would be greatly appreciated.

Last evening at the Committee of the Whole board meeting, we received Director of Education Camillo Cipriano’s Annual report for year 2022.

It contains a wealth of information on a multitude of successful accomplishments and good news stories generated as a result of networking with individuals, community groups and organizations by Board senior staff, principals, teachers, supportive school staff, students, parents and families.

In striving for such success, involvement and support by community partners such as you who are seated around this table, is essential and appreciated. Putting the report together was a team effort, it’s very well done, it’s an easy read and I am sure you will find the information relevant to a number of interests we all share as members of SEAC. You can check it out on the Niagara Catholic District School Board website.

H. NCPIC REPORT – Read by Superintendent Pizzoferrato
At the January 12, 2023 NCPIC Meeting

1. K-12 Consultants: Andrea Stranges and Mary Vetere provided a Decodable Books presentation. The presentation was very informative and well-received.
2. Proposals for parent engagement events were put forward for consideration. Further discussion will take place at the subcommittee meeting.

3. Ian Woods, Niagara Catholic OAPCE Regional Director shared updates on OAPCE year-end reports. There will be a virtual OAPCE meeting on February 8, 2023. You can register for the meeting through the OAPCE site.

4. The NCPIC Meeting of May 4, will be rescheduled to Thursday, May 11, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. at the Catholic Education Centre due to the Blessing of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Catholic Elementary School in Thorold.

5. The Ministry of Education continues to host virtual engagement series with PICs and Board Leads to share local challenges, successes, and promising practices to support parent engagement in their children's schools and in their learning. Government of Ontario priorities/programs have also been shared during these sessions and participants are invited to provide feedback. The Ministry Summary-November 2022 Meeting with PICs and Board Leads has been posted on the Board website under the NCPIC portal for parents/guardians.

6. NCPIC members were invited to provide feedback on the Draft 2023-2024 School Year Elementary and Secondary Calendars no later than February 1, 2023 to andrea.towne@ncdsb.com for consideration by the School Year Calendar Committee.

7. The Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education Annual Benefit Gala with honorary guest Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, D.D., Bishop of St. Catharines will take place on Friday, March 3, 2023 at Club Roma Event and Conference Centre at 6:00 p.m. Proceeds from the Gala will continue to support student scholarships and students in need. NCPIC members were encouraged to attend the Gala. Tickets are available until February 23, 2023.

I. NOTICES OF MOTION

None

J. INFORMATION ITEMS

None

K. MOMENT OF SILENCE / REFLECTION OF LIFE

L. NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, March 1, 2023 at 6:30 pm in person

M. ADJOURNMENT 8:05 pm

Motion to Adjourn: R. Smith

Seconded: E. Glencross