



**MEETING MINUTES OF THE
NIAGARA CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE**

MARCH 2, 2023

Meeting Minutes of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee, held on Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 6:30 p.m., virtually and in-person in the Father Kenneth Burns csc Board Room at the Catholic Education Centre, 427 Rice Road, Welland, ON.

Co-Chair Vernelli called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Co-Chair Vernelli, requested that in order to facilitate the items on the agenda and as per the NCPIC By-Laws that the NCPIC meeting can be extended beyond 8:30 p.m. to no later than 9:00 p.m.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Land Acknowledgement and Opening Prayer
Fr. Paul MacNeil led the Land Acknowledgement and Opening Prayer.

2. Roll Call:

Regrets: Melanie Oakes-Flegg, Josie Rocca, Kevin Timmins and Ava Venzon

Parent Members	Geographical Area	Present In-person	Present Electronically	Excused	Absent
Lindsey Spanik	Grimsby/Lincoln/West Lincoln				√
Alexandria Attree	Merritton/Thorold	√			
Ian Woods	Merritton/Thorold			√	
Julie Bateman	Niagara Falls		√		
Marilyn Fabiano	Niagara Falls		√	Joined at 7:03 p.m.	
Olivia O'Reilly-Romanoff	Niagara Falls		√		
Luciano Robazza	Niagara Falls		√	Joined at 6:43 p.m.	
Brenda Annen	St. Catharines/Niagara-on-the-Lake	√			
Rita Colling	St. Catharines/Niagara-on-the-Lake			√	
Jeremy Harb	St. Catharines/Niagara-on-the-Lake	√			
Stephanie Ireland	St. Catharines/Niagara-on-the-Lake		√		
Melanie Oakes-Flegg	Welland/Pelham			√	
Carrie Vernelli	Welland/Pelham	√			
Fr. Paul MacNeil	Bishop/Diocesan Representative	√			
Ava Venzon	Secondary Student Senate Representative			√	
Trustees					
Natalia Benoit	Trustee				√
Joe Bruzzese	Trustee	√			

The following staff attended:

Camillo Cipriano, Director of Education, **Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells**, Superintendent of Education, **Joe Tornabuono**, Elementary Principal and **Yvonne Anderson**, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant

Special Guests: Danny Di Lorenzo, Chair of the Board and Giancarlo Vetrone, Superintendent of Business and Financial Services

3. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: Co-Chair Annen

THAT the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee approve the Agenda of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of March 2, 2023, as amended: Addition to the report from the Director's Designate Superintendent of Education.

CARRIED

4. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No declarations of conflict of interest were declared with any item on the agenda.

5. Approval of the Minutes of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of January 12, 2023

Moved by: Alexandria Attree

THAT the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee approve the minutes of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of January 12, 2023 as presented.

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATIONS

1. Information Technology: Grant Frost, Chief Information Officer and Jeff Maxwell, TELTc Consultant

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells welcomed Director of Education Camillo Cipriano, Chair of the Board Danny Di Lorenzo, and Superintendent of Business and Financial Services Giancarlo Vetrone to the NCPIC meeting.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells stated that as a follow-up to the new business item from the January 12, 2023 NCPIC meeting, and the request from Trustee Bruzzese to investigate the concern, that she was pleased to welcome and introduce Grant Frost, Niagara Catholic's Chief Information Officer and Jeff Maxwell, e-Learning Consultant to make a presentation on Information Technology.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells also thanked the NCPIC members who submitted questions about Information Technology as the questions were reviewed and used as a guide for the presentation.

Grant Frost provided a presentation on Niagara Catholic Technology and Cyber-Security and Jeff Maxwell provided a presentation on the Niagara Catholic Virtual Learning Platform. A question-and-answer period followed the presentations.

2. Institute for Catholic Education (ICE): Presentation to Parents-Family Life Education Hope Expectations-Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells shared that the Institute for Catholic Education is undergoing a renewal of the Family Life Education program, *Fully Alive*. Every Ontario Catholic school board has been asked to gather feedback from their Catholic Parent Involvement Committee about their hope expectations for the Family Life Education program, *Fully Alive*. Superintendent Forsyth-Sells presented the PowerPoint presentation provided by the Institute for Catholic Education which was included in the agenda package sent to all members before the meeting.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reviewed the questions at the end of the PowerPoint. NCPIC parent members were provided with a feedback template that included the three questions. Parent members were invited to share their feedback and/or submit their responses to Yvonne Anderson, no later than March 20, 2023. The feedback received will be submitted to the Institute for Catholic Education on behalf of the NCPIC.

The three questions are:

1. How would you express your deepest hope for your children in Family Life Education in their Catholic school?
2. Is there anything about the current program that you especially like?
3. Is there anything about *Fully Alive* that you would want to see in new program?

C. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

1. Faith Formation/Parent Engagement

Co-Chair Vernelli reported that at the Faith Formation and Parent Engagement Subcommittee Meeting held on Monday, February 9, 2023, it was decided that the Faith Formation and Parent Engagement Subcommittees would collaborate for one event. Josie Rocca (Faith Formation) and Alexandria Attree (Parent Engagement) were acclaimed as the Co-Chairs respectively.

Alexandria Attree thanked the members who attended the subcommittee meeting and stated that the proposal incorporated all of the input received at the meeting.

Proposal:

Theme: Cultural Approach to Catholic Education
Date: May 3, 2023
Time: 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Location: Denis Morris Catholic High School, St. Catharines

Agenda:

5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.- Social with light refreshments
6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.- Keynote Speaker (Fr. Tony Ricard) Faith Formation and Spiritual Praise

Parent Workshops-Parents will have the opportunity to register for two workshops

7:10 p.m. to 7:55 p.m.- Parent Workshop- Breakout Session 1
8:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.- Parent Workshop-Breakout Session 2

Workshop Options:

1. Decodable Books (Primary K-3)-Niagara Catholic staff and presenters Kim Lockhart and Kate Winn
2. Math/Coding (Intermediate 4-6)-Niagara Catholic staff
3. Internet Safety (Senior 7-12) Niagara Regional Police Service
4. Pro-Life-recommendation-Emily Albrecht
5. Equity and Inclusion/Indigenous-Leela MadhavaRau, Equity and Human Rights Consultant

Childcare: To support parent participation childcare will be provided. Secondary students will be invited to participate and could earn Christian Community Service Hours. Students will have an opportunity to create a Rosary, as May is the month for mothers and our Blessed Mother Mary.

The Faith Formation/Parent Engagement Event for May 3, 2023 was approved by consensus.

D. POLICY

Co-Chair Vernelli reported that the Electronic Communications System (Employees) Policy (201.12) and the Trustee Code of Conduct Policy (100.12) are currently being vetted.

1. Feedback to be submitted on behalf of the NCPIC is to be sent to Yvonne Anderson, no later than 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 21, 2023.
2. Feedback submitted as an individual is to be submitted directly to Anna Pisano, no later than 12:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 23, 2023.

E. CO-CHAIRS REPORT

A Ministry of Education meeting with PIC Chairs/Co-Chairs and Board Leads was held on February 21, 2023. Co-Chair Vernelli reported that she was unable to attend this meeting and that Co-Chair Annen was delayed therefore, Superintendent Forsyth-Sells provided a brief report.

- Superintendent Forsyth-Sells shared that the Ministry of Education continues to host virtual meetings with PIC Chairs/Co-Chairs and Board Leads to support parent engagement. The meeting of February 21, 2023 focused on student mental health and well-being, as good mental health is fundamental to a student's ability to learn and to succeed at the school and in life. The Ministry also hosted breakout sessions for parents and for Board Leads to discuss best practices and resources to continue to support student mental health and well-being. The Niagara Catholic Mental Health Team, with the Mental Health Lead, Social Workers, Child and Youth Workers, School Mental Health Champions, and the Board Mental Health Leadership Team continues to focus on the importance of mental health and well-being for all students using the resources provided by the Ministry of Education through School Mental Health Ontario.
- Co-Chair Annen also shared that in the breakout session for parents the Ministry reported that they are currently collecting data on bullying and that the data will be shared with parents.

F. OAPCE REPORT

Ian Woods sent regrets but provided the report below.

- OAPCE had their first Board of Directors Meeting of the new year at the beginning of February. OAPCE was pleased to welcome Bishop Most Rev. Yvan Mathieu and Dr. Anne Jamieson who joined the meeting virtually. The focus of the meeting was to discuss strategies to further connect the OAPCE Directors with and regional representatives.
- OAPCE is pleased to announce that Denice Garell-Teti from Halton Catholic is the new Chair and Sarah Tjin-a-joe from York Catholic is the new Executive Communications Secretary. Their many years of service and expertise will enhance OAPCE presentations, newsletters and online resources.
- OAPCE continues to create a new series of resources for “Parents4Parents Press” to provide parents with simple strategies for parent engagement focusing on “re-engaging and re-claiming parent engagement” and different ways to bring parents back into the schools.
- The OAPCE March Newsletter includes a new section “Family Zone” which offers tips for families to engage in Lenten reflections. These reflections are available on the OAPCE website, YouTube Channel, Daily TV Mass App and OAPCE Podcast.
- OAPCE has increased their presences on Twitter by creating more themed posts like #motivationMonday, #Wednesdaywisdom, etc. Parents are encouraged to re-tweet posts.
- The 84th OAPCE Annual Conference will be held on April 22, 2023 in Kingston, ON. The theme this year is “Deepening Our Faith as Engaged Parents”. Guest Speakers include Dr. Josephine Lombardi, Coach Martinez and Theresa Kennedy. A vendor mall will also be on site. Registration opens on Monday, April 6, 2023 and all parents are encouraged to attend. Travel bursaries are available through OAPCE. Further details can be found on the OAPCE website.
- OACPE will host a joint regional meeting with Algonquin, Halton, Niagara, Waterloo and York Catholic School Boards on March 27, 2023.
- Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) will host Provincial Symposium-Adult Faith Formation in Catholic Education on Tuesday, May 9 and Wednesday, May 10, 2023 at the Delta Hotel by Marriott Toronto Airport and Conference Center. Approximately, 700 participants are currently registered for this event.

G. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR’S DESIGNATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

1. March Break: March 13-17, 2023

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells shared that March Break is scheduled for March 13-17, 2023. Schools will be closed, but the Catholic Education Centre will be open.

2. Director’s Annual Report 2022

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that the Director’s Annual Report 2022 has been provided in the meeting package to all NCPIC members for information. The annual report highlights achievement and accomplishments during the 2022 school year. The report has been submitted to the Ministry of Education and is posted on the Board website.

3. 2023-2024 Elementary and Secondary School Year Calendars

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells shared that based on the feedback from the consultation process, discussions with the School Year Calendar Committee, Senior Administrative Council and our

coterminous board, the 2023-2024 Elementary and Secondary School Year Calendars were presented at the February 14, 2023 Committee of the Whole Meeting and approved at the Board Meeting of February 28, 2023. The calendars have been submitted to the Ministry of Education for final approval.

Highlights of the 2023-2024 School Year Calendar

First Day of School for Elementary and Secondary

Tuesday, September 5, 2023

Christmas Break

Monday, December 25, 2023 to Friday, January 5, 2024

March Break

Monday, March 11 to Friday, March 15, 2024

P.A. Day

Monday, April 8, 2024 (due to the Solar Eclipse)

4. NCPIC Financial Report

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported on the finances of the NCPIC.

5. 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells shared that the Distinguished Alumni Award is presented annually to graduates from a Niagara Catholic secondary school. The individual must be described by the nominee as extraordinary, notable or acclaimed and has achieved distinguished success in their adult life. The nominee must have achieved and reflect the characteristics described by the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. Nominations may be submitted by staff and/or members of the school communities. The nomination form has been provided in the meeting package. Nominations must be submitted to Linda Marconi, no later than April 3, 2023.

H. BISHOP/DIOCESEAN REPORT

Fr. Paul MacNeil reported that:

- as a result of the Synod 2023 consultation process, progress is still being made on the leadership model for the diocese. A new deanery structure has been implemented and all parishes are expected to be working in the formation of a pastoral council.
- for over 35 years, the Diocese of St. Catharines has published the Vineyard with a circulation of 10,000. The Vineyard is now available electronically at <http://www.saintcd.com/diocesan-directory/the-vineyard>. All members were encouraged to review the Vineyard as it contains a wealth of information about the diocese.
- in addition to individual reconciliation times at individual parishes, the sacrament of penance will be available to all parishioners at all parishes on Saturday, March 25, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- this year's Development and Peace Share Lent Campaign is entitled "Stand for the Land" and this supports the broader 5-year campaign "Create Hope". All members were encouraged to give generously to this worthy cause. Further information may be found at www.devp.org.

- Assumption University is offering a graduate diploma in Catholic Studies. The application form is available at www.assumptionu.ca/diploma-in-catholic-studies. The application deadline is May 3, 2023.
- all members are invited to journey through the 40 days of Lent with the National Catholic Broadcasting Council at www.dailytvmass.com. Participants include Bishop Bergie, Cardinal Collins, Fr. Michael Coutts, Sr. Ann Immaculee, Fr. Obinna Ifeanyi, Fr. John Bertao and Fr. Pat Fitzpatrick.
- the Roman Catholic Church of Canada is committed to raising 30 million dollars over the next five years to support the Indigenous communities. The funds will be administered by a National Indigenous Fund Committee consisting of Bishops, clergy and members of the Indigenous community. Each diocese is expected to form its own committee to bring forth local initiatives that will enhance the relationship between our cultures, bring about reconciliation and foster a positive mission moving forward. Volunteers from the Indigenous communities are encouraged to participate.
- The Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education Annual Benefit Gala takes place tomorrow evening.

I. STUDENT SENATE REPORT

Co-Chair Vernelli on behalf of Ava Venzon reported that:

- Niagara Catholic Student Senate has partnered with Niagara Nutrition Partners for a fundraiser. Each secondary school in the Board has asked for a \$2.00 donation from students to support the breakfast program. Each student who makes a donation will receive and apply on March 7, and will gather to participate in the “Big Crunch” when all students will take a bite of their apple at the same time.
- Members of Student Senate were invited to review the Niagara Catholic Multi-Year Strategic Plan 2021-2026 for resiliency, mental health, and positivity.
- Mental Health Week and Catholic Education Week will collaborate on activities to support faith and mental health during the week of May 8-12, 2023.
- The “Time to Shine” SEAC/Student Senate Formal is well underway. This event will take place on April 18, 2023 at Saint Paul Catholic High School.

J. SEAC REPORT

Alexandria Attree reported:

- SEAC was pleased to welcome two new members to the committee, Community Representative, Krystine Donato and from Bethesda Services, Alyson Wilson.
- SEAC would like to welcome a representative from the Indigenous Community to the committee.
- Nick Smith, Niagara Support Service (NSS) presented information on Niagara Training and Employment Agency (NTEC) Regional Respite Program.
- Kids Helping Kids was celebrated in Niagara Catholic schools from February 13 to 24, with fun filled activities for our students (i.e., creative hair day, funky sock day, PJ Day, Western Day, etc.).
- Ontario Autism Program (OAP) shared information with families at the transition to school event hosted by Niagara Children’s Centre. Principals share how families can access OAP from the Niagara Catholic ABA Team.

- The transition to school process continues as coordinators and student support teams complete observations and review student information provided by community partners. In the coming months transition meetings will begin to support students entering Kindergarten in September 2023 and to foster a successful transition.
- In support of Lexia-Phase 2 Elementary, the Program Resource Teacher Team is meeting with elementary school staff to review student progress. The additional licenses are being assigned to elementary schools to further increase access to Lexia.
- In support of Lexia-Phase 1 Secondary, meetings have been held with all secondary schools to implement Lexia. Models will vary based on school sites for Semester 2.
- Bethesda is offering a 4-week session for parents of children (ages 2-12) with Down Syndrome with Linda Moroz beginning in February. Principals of identified schools will be notified and an invitation will be extended to parents for participation.
- the Behaviour Resource Teacher Team continues to deliver their social-emotional learning framework presentations entitled “I Am A Child of God” throughout the system. Over 100 classrooms have benefited from this program and self-regulation tool for students.
- with the support of SEAC, the Student Support Services Department will be reviewing and updating the Special Education Plan.
- The Niagara Catholic Accessibility Planning Committee will host an *All Access Event* for students on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at the Holiday Inn, St. Catharines. Further details to follow. An *All Access Event* for parents will also take place at a later date. Further details to follow.
- Parents are encouraged to attend or livestream the SEAC meetings as the highlights are extremely informative and highlighting Niagara Catholic community partners.

MOTION

Moved by: Co-Chair Annen that the meeting of the NCPIC be extended to no later than 9:00 p.m. All in favour.

CARRIED

K. STAFF REPORTS

Joe Tornabuono, Elementary Principal shared that:

- Ash Wednesday marked the beginning of the very important season of Lent. Lent is a time for “Spring Cleaning”, a cleaning of our hearts and our minds, as we continue our spiritual journey and grow closer to God. Lent is a time of going beyond ourselves and doing things that will make a difference for others. Our students are challenged to make Lenten promises of doing good deeds and helping others. During these days of Lent, we strive to be even better Merchants of Hope for those around us. This is transparent in the daily operations of our schools. With the season of Lent upon us, many of our schools are finding ways to demonstrate our Catholic faith, such as:
 - Mass celebrations (in-person and virtually)
 - Rosary Prayer
 - Holy Week Activities: Stations of the Cross/Last Supper
 - Mini-retreats with Niagara Catholic Elementary Chaplains
 - Lenten Food Drives
- Students in grade 2 are preparing for first Reconciliation and first Holy Communion and Grade 8 students are preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

- Students received the Ontario Provincial Report Card and where applicable their Individual Education Plan (IEP) in February. Parents are encouraged to review the report card with their child and to contact the classroom teacher to discuss next steps. Teachers have also been working with students to set goals for Term 2.
- Elementary schools hosted a Kindergarten Open House and are preparing staffing for the new school year.
- Students participated in the Kids Helping Kids Campaign. Funds will be collected and distributed to the Niagara Children's Centre and the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education.
- As part of the Early Reading Strategy, teacher use a universal screening tool in Kindergarten to identify students at risk. Prevention and intervention strategies focusing on phonological awareness, phonemic awareness and phonics instruction support student achievement and well-being.
- Numeracy continues to be a main focus as we continue to work with students to understand and improve their number sense. This includes mathematical fluency, a focused mathematical lesson and purposeful practice for students. Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning at home by showing interest in what their children learn and discover. Examples include: cooking at home; asking your children to measure ingredients, including your child in calculating/predicting the cost of groceries. This helps students connect mathematical concepts with real life.
- Extra-curricular activities continue throughout the school year.

L. TRUSTEE REPORTS

- Nil Report

M. OTHER BUSINESS

- Trustee Bruzzese requested that the NCPIC review the role of the NCPIC as an advisory committee to the Board with a focus on parent engagement.
- Marilyn Fabiano requested information on the decision-making process for cancelling transportation and/or school closures due to anticipated inclement weather. Director Cipriano reviewed the process which includes the consultation with the Niagara Regional Police Service, Niagara Student Transportation Services, and the Director of the co-terminus Board. Director Cipriano clarified that the Executive Director of Niagara Student Transportation Services (NSTS) determines whether to cancel school transportation services and the Director of Education makes the final decision regarding school/Board site closures.

N. NEXT MEETING: Thursday, May 11, 2023 at 6:30 p.m., at the Catholic Education Centre

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

P. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Olivia O'Reilly-Romanoff

THAT the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of March 2, 2023 be adjourned.

CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.