



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

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 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 – S. Walsh

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	
Palombo, Pina	Down Syndrome Niagara (President)		x
Attree, Alexandria	Autism Ontario Niagara Region	x	
T.B.D.	Indigenous Representative		

Smith, Lorraine	Mainstream	x	
Smith, Rita	Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet)	x	
Wilson, Alyson	Bethesda Services	x	
Donato, Krystine	Community Representative	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
Wiken, Brittany (for Keighan, Kelly)	Speech-Language Pathologist	x	
Bidel, Tara-Lynn (for Brochu, Grace)	Student Support Facilitator		x
De Lisio, Angela	Behaviour Analyst	x	
Mancuso, Vincent	Behaviour Resource Teacher	x	
Bailey, Babette	Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing	x	
Criddle, Ann Marie	Program Resource Teacher	x	
Davies, Elizabeth	Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary	x	

4. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: L. Smith

Seconded by: A. 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 February 1, 2023

Moved by: L. Smith

Seconded by: E. Glencross

B. PRESENTATION – Director’s Annual Report Video

<https://youtu.be/LxqdpWEcVRw>

C. AGENDA ITEMS

1. SEAC Chair’s Report (Chair Somma)

-Review of goals - our sub groups met last week to solidify actionable items to bring to the SEAC

and to the board team for review and approval. Both groups are keen to begin the work.

Goal #1

Establish a consistent process of how we communicate information to parents and between schools - processes for documentation and resource for sharing information.

Recommendation/Action Items:

- Focus on end of Grade 9: students with IEPs or those accessing special education services.
- Solidify the process which is already happening to ensure all necessary information is covered /shared establish “*Transition meeting*” (paired with IPRC/course selection meeting/ TAY) - how did the year go? what are the pathways? certificate vs. diploma, planning, etc.)

Questions for board team:

1. Where does this get documented? Perhaps on the transition plan of IEP.
2. Does the board provide directive for this to be regular practice? Do we create an outline of what can/should be discussed at the meeting (checklist)- review courses taken, review credit/ non-credit/ partial credit, pathways? Or does one exist?
3. 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.
4. Can this happen when teachers attend grade 8 day? Information sessions to provide information about secondary transition, de-streamed courses, pathways, special education classroom vs. resource (services available to students).

-create a checklist of items to cover with teachers during this session (student services/ principal would be involved in running the session for teachers) What you need to know about secondary transitions and services.

Goal # 2

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

- SEAC spotlight for each agency- one agency per month in school newsletter (what the agency is? What services they provide? etc.)
- posted under a banner (*community resources*) on the NCDSB website
- posted monthly on school/ board social media (Facebook page)

Action item: Create a schedule for each month to highlight an organization/program/services - each month the organization rep would be required to

complete the template and provide it to Gino to share with the principals for the newsletters.

- Could also include a blurb, reminder of upcoming activities
- Could create a short video to post/ link to the newsletter/ facebook page
- 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)

Action Item: Develop a graphic organizer to display key information about agencies, with contact Niagara at the center to be shared electronically with teachers, support staff, families.

D. AGENCY REPORTS

Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – Emily Glencross

- **Trivia Night Fundraiser** - LDANR will be hosting our annual Trivia Night Fundraiser on Friday, March 31st at the Armenian Centre in St. Catharines (please see attached for the event flyer!)
- **Summer Camp** - Applications for our S.L.A.M. (Sunshine, Learning, Achievement, and More!) Summer Camp opened on Monday, February 27th – any interested families can apply via our website! Sites will be hosted in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls this summer. (Flyer is attached for further details).
- **Spring program applications** open on Monday, March 20th at 6:00 am on our website! Literacy tutoring, transition support, and emotional/social skill programs will be running this spring.

Niagara Children's Centre – Michelle Maxwell (Read by Superintendent Pizzoferrato)

- We are working in partnership with the Niagara Region and EarlyON Centres in order to develop education for EarlyON staff on how to interact with children/families with special needs. We recognize that families of children with special needs find accessing EarlyONs challenging for various reasons. We want the EarlyON environment to be inclusive and to feel like a safe space for these families. We are very excited to be providing some training as well as resources to the EarlyONs with the support of the Region.
- We continue our partnership with Bethesda for a new round of the Entry to School (ETS) program starting again on Monday. A reminder that ETS is the intensive 15hr/week program through the OAP that runs for 6 months to support the transition to school process for children with an ASD diagnosis. It is supported by Behaviour Therapists, ECEs, SLPs, OTs and CDAs across our agencies. We had great anecdotal feedback from the group last year (principals, staff, ABA facilitators) where they reported a marked increase in regulation and ability to follow routines as compared to other children on the spectrum that transitioned to school without the ETS program.
- Our SBRS-OT/PT manager, Julie McNamara, continues to work with the Student Support Coordinators to implement the Tiered Service Model for SBRS OT/PT services into some schools in the Board as a trial.
- We have many new "Try it" Opportunities being offered at the Centre, including Sledge Hockey, Volt Hockey, and Lego Robotics. We encourage families and educators to check out our Event Calendar: <https://niagarachildrenscentre.com/calendar>

- We also invite all of you to register a team for our 6th Annual Plasma Car Race on Thursday May 25th at the Gale Centre. More information here: <https://niagarachildrenscentre.akaraisin.com/ui/plasmacarrace2023>
- Our SmartStart Hub has launched (<https://niagarachildrenscentre.com/smartstarhub>). We are happy to present at a future SEAC meeting regarding the purpose and function of the SmartStart Hub.

Pathstone Mental Health – Tara Kelly

No Update

Down Syndrome Niagara – Pina Palombo

- World Down Syndrome Day will be celebrated on Tuesday March 21, 2023 Get ready to “Rock Your Socks” Our community partners and schools across Niagara will promote this day by wearing mismatched socks. Niagara Falls Illumination Board as confirmed that the Falls will be illuminated Blue and Yellow at 10:00 pm for a 15-minute duration to recognize World Down Syndrome Day **March 21, 2023**
- Here is a link for ways to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day in our schools and in the community <https://cdss.ca/awareness/world-down-syndrome-day/>
- Many schools in Niagara Catholic show their support by wearing mis-matched socks and at this time a huge shout out to Our Lady of Fatima school in Grimsby for their idea of having students tie dye socks blue and yellow for the day and all money raised that day from the sale of these socks are going directly to our Down Syndrome Niagara Group.
- DSN AGM will be held on Sunday March 26, 2023 all members encouraged to attend and the event is posted on our FB page and will be emailed to all our members.
- DSN group is gearing up on hosting a number of events for this year, looking into bringing back our Trivia Night (TBA), and putting out dates and looking into venues for our Annual Summer Picnic, Halloween dance, Friendship Walk, Safari Niagara Day, Christmas Party and educational workshops for all members to attend.
- This past Sunday February 28, the foundation G-MC Homies with Extra Chromies had another cross fit work out day in Welland at BILT Fitness. All Down Syndrome individuals can participate in this work out free of charge. The foundation has booked cross fit work outs at BILT at least once a month on a Sunday from 10 – 11:30 am with hopes to increase to twice a month on a regular basis. These sessions are very well attended and is very popular with our members.

Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Alexandria Attree

Regional Summer Camp – registration opens March 20 at 10 am. It tends to fill up very quickly.

Mainstream – Lorraine Smith

Transition to Adulthood Planning Tool Kit – valuable information for families and teachers/school system for transition from grade 8 to secondary school. Copies are left for anyone to take one. (Copy attached)

Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet) – Rita Smith

March Break Camp – anyone can attend, no just those with disabilities. Inclusive program.

Summer Camp – starting to plan

Teen Group – 2/3 teenagers with a worker planning outings on a Friday night

Community Living (Welland/Pelham) – Monique Somma

No report other than stay tuned for information regarding summer camp registration will be shared next month.

E. STUDENT REPORT

Student Senate Representative – Mackenzie

F. STAFF REPORTS

Secondary Principal – Adele

No update

Elementary Principal – Susy

No report

Student Support Department - Gino & Anthony

Gino – Bethesda (Alison)thank you for joining us.

Attending St. Paul school tomorrow to meet regarding the Time to Shine Formal Dance on April 18, 2023. Very excited to seeing this event come to fruition.

Accessibility Awareness Conference also on April 18, 2023 at Holiday Inn, St. Catharines. More details to follow in a memo going out next week.

Evening session for parents being held on a different night.

Unstoppable Tracy is our key note speaker for both events and also speaking to all of our secondary schools as well. Michael Jacques will also be addressing the attendees.

SEAC Survey – Has gone out this week to principals for distribution to start next week. By June we should have some quality feedback.

Anthony:

1. **SEAC Survey** - The Supporting Students Survey has been distributed to school staff/administrators and is in the process of being distributed through schools to parents of students who are accessing an Individual Education Plan (IEP), including students identified with a Ministry of Education exceptionality. A summary of the survey results is targeted for availability at a future SEAC meeting. Further consideration and

input regarding future survey opportunities can be discussed at that time. We look forward to learning from the completed survey results to address some next steps.

2. Through the foundational work of the Student Support Facilitators (SSFs) the Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) trainer Team continues to provide our system with access to their services and certification-level training to address and highlight safe and effective practices through our Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) training to ensure a safer school community.
3. The Behaviour Resource Teacher (BRT) Team presented to the February Committee of the Whole regarding the delivery of the Social-Emotional program "I am a Child of God" - this delivery sharpens student achievement by increasing access to curriculum for struggling students and fostering authentic relationships with staff to provide resources to empower Niagara Catholic educators with the ability to deliver components of the program in their individual classrooms.
4. Day 4 of **Empower Training** for teachers new to the program this year is taking place this Friday March 3 at the CEC.
5. The next **Gifted Student Module** is taking place on March 2nd and 3rd at the CEC. This Amazing Race math module will give students fun challenges to work on and help them think about math in a new way. They will work together in teams on different math tasks, with "pit stops" and "detours", while they go through a competition that is like a race.
5. Student Support has completed all High School Family of Schools meetings with system staff with a focus on grade 8 to 9 transitions. This process has already begun in order to best prepare students for their first year of secondary school.

G. TRUSTEE REPORTS – Trustee Joyner/Trustee Marino

Trustee Marino – In our Land acknowledgement at the start of this evening's meeting we paid tribute to and honoured our Indigenous people. I realize that we are still awaiting the appointment of an Indigenous Representative to the Special Education Advisory Committee and I am looking forward to that.

Effective this September, the Niagara Catholic District School Board as a mandatory English Credit requirement, will introduce the Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Metis and Inuit Course in grade 11 classes.

At the board's regular meeting last night (February 28, 2023) trustees were impressed with, and very enthusiastic about the course which they found very informative when they heard details in a presentation from an Indigenous Consultant and a Literary Consultant.

The course has already been implemented by several other school boards in Ontario, and reaction has been very positive by school staff and students alike.

A number of other boards as well as Niagara Catholic are now planning to do the same.

The course is designed to give students a thorough understanding of indigenous themes, literary styles and cultural insights. It should leave them with a knowledge of such areas as Indigenous spirituality, self-governance, identity, justice, human rights and relations and issues with contemporary Canada. I would like to suggest that sometime at a future SEAC meeting, perhaps when the Indigenous committee member has been appointed, we may want to hear a presentation similar to the one last night. I am sure you will all find it as informative as we did.

H. NCPIC REPORT –

None

I. NOTICES OF MOTION

None

J. INFORMATION ITEMS

None

K. MOMENT OF SILENCE / REFLECTION OF LIFE

L. NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, April 11, 2023 at 6:30 pm in person

M. ADJOURNMENT 8: 03 pm

Motion to Adjourn: Chair Somma

Seconded: R. Smith