



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

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 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/>

ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Land Acknowledgement – Suzy 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 – Adele Felice

3. Roll Call

SEAC Meeting Roll Call – September 6, 2023

| Members | Affiliations | Yes | Excused |
|--|---|------------|----------------|
| Somma, Monique | Community Living (Welland/Pelham) - CHAIR | | x |
| Morrison, Emily (for Emily Glencross) | Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region | | x |
| Maxwell, Michelle | Niagara Children’s Centre | x | |
| Kelly, Tara | Pathstone Mental Health | | x |
| Andrea Pede | Down Syndrome Niagara | 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 | |
| T.B.D. | Student Senate Representative | | |
| Di Gioia, Jim | Coordinator of Student Support | | x |
| Giancola, Danny | Coordinator of Student Support | x | |
| Criddle, Ann Marie | Coordinator of Student Support | x | |

| Observers | Affiliations | Yes | Excused |
|-------------------|--|-----|---------|
| Keighan, Kelly | Speech-Language Pathologist | x | |
| Brochu, Grace | Student Support Facilitator | x | |
| Price, Angela | Behaviour Analyst | x | |
| Mancuso, Vince | Behaviour Resource Teacher | x | |
| Bailey, Babette | Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing | x | |
| Fisher, Amber | Niagara Support Services (NSS) | | |
| Hornick, Tina | Special Initiative Teacher | | |
| Fuller, Kayla | ABA Facilitator | x | |
| Loughhead, Brooke | ABA Lead | | |
| Davies, Elizabeth | Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary | x | |

4. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: Rita Smith

Seconded by: 4 in favour/no opposed

5. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No disclosure of interest was declared with any items on the agenda.

6. Approval of Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of June 7, 2023

Moved by: Trustee Marino

Seconded by: 5 in favour/carried

B. PRESENTATIONS

1. All Access Home - Kayla Fuller, Niagara Catholic ABA Facilitator

2. New Announcement – Kayla Fuller, Niagara Catholic ABA Facilitator

Ministry of Education has approved our grant for \$140,000 to continue to build on what we started this past school year. We are excited to move forward with planning for the proposed initiatives.

Superintendent Pizzoferrato – Congratulations to the team for what they accomplished. The news of this successful application was well received by the planning committee members who are eager to move forward with planning for the proposed initiatives. The outcome of this work will benefit the students and staff who will continue to grow in their awareness, recognition and understanding of barriers that affect our students and will empower individuals to make a difference for others in the most meaningful ways.

The purpose of the grant application was for the Board to commit to a 2 year program where we zeroed in on raising awareness in identifying and eliminating barriers. The learning was infinitely beneficial to us.

This year we are looking at involving the secondary students in an experiential day to provide a similar experience had by the elementary students.

We are open to feedback and ideas.

C. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Overview of the Role of the SEAC Committee – Superintendent Pizzoferrato

No new additions, just overview of the purpose of the role. Members are advisory in nature.

The recommendations you make to the Board go forward through the Trustees.

You help us gain better insight about what our families experience. You hear about our services and we hear about yours. We are partners and want to serve our families.

I like to stress the importance of this advisory role and extend the invitation to share.

2. SEAC Handbook Development – Superintendent Pizzoferrato

We wanted to look at items such as the voting process and procedures. E Davies took this on as a project over the summer. We are working through the draft stages and it will come forward to the committee.

Please connect with E. Davies if you would like to include anything.

How we parallel that with the handbook guidelines policy and procedures of the Board etc. make it meaningful to committee

3. Feedback on Goals – Superintendent Pizzoferrato

Monique in her absence has shared the link to the google documents in June minutes.

4. Department Profile – Superintendent Pizzoferrato

Currently filling a retirement, introducing ABA class, etc.

Ann Marie Criddle – Coordinator Student Support

Anthony Di Toro – Behaviour Resource Teacher

Tina Hornick – Special Program Teacher

D. AGENCY REPORTS

Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – Emily Glencross

Niagara Children’s Centre – Michelle Maxwell

Our new Fort Erie site has opened at the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara Fort Erie location. We now have 2 functioning treatment spaces that can accommodate a wider variety of our therapy services (SLP, OT, PT, SW, Recreation therapy, etc.). We look forward to the opportunities this new space and partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara will afford us.

The Centre continues its partnership with Bethesda in delivery of the Entry to School Program through the OAP. We are thankful for the partnership with the Catholic Board, as 3 of the ETS program sites were in NCDSB schools (St. Augustine, St. Gabriel and St. Vincent) which supported transition for many of the children. The program wrapped up last week and included a great collaboration with the ABA facilitators from the Board, as they were able to come to the programs to coordinate and support transition. These ETS students are eligible for in-school consults at request of the board.

Our School-Based Rehabilitation Services OT program continues its plans for the roll out of the Tiered Model of service. Approximately 10-12 schools in the Board are on board for the first phase of roll out of the Tiered model. Staff will be connecting with principals at these schools to discuss processes and consent requirements this fall. The Centre is in the process of arranging a presentation to the ERTs on tiered model. We'll be sharing information on the SmartStart Hubs with ERTs as well.

Please consider supporting our Superhero Run (volunteer, participate or donate!). We are back at Brock this year with a 1K family fun walk, as well as a 2.5K and 5K run. Saturday October 14th <https://niagarachildrenscentre.akaraisin.com/ui/superherorun2023>

Please continue to check and share our Events calendar:
<https://niagarachildrenscentre.com/calendar>

Pathstone Mental Health – Tara Kelly
N/A

Down Syndrome Niagara –Andrea Pedo
Music with Mendelt:

o This past summer, we hosted three one-hour sessions for our members with Mendelt and it was a great success! Members and their families were able to enjoy popular music played by Mendelt in a virtual setting, and each child would make a song request – some of which he didn't know right away but was committed to learning for the next session.

• **Annual Friendship Walk 2023:**

o Down Syndrome Niagara is proud to announce our annual Friendship Walk on Sunday, September 24, 2023, at the Grantham Lions Club, along the Welland Canal Path in St. Catharines.

o Families, friends and community partners walk together along the Canal to raise awareness about Down Syndrome. Through advocacy and support we are dedicated to improving opportunities for people with Down Syndrome that promotes independence, self-confidence and inclusion in their communities.

o 100% of the fundraiser proceeds are put directly into our community and will be used to cover the costs of our Halloween Dances, Christmas Parties, creating new parent package materials, conference fees, subsidies, and special therapies.

o There will be penny raffles, 50/50 draw, food (for purchase), bouncy castle, face painter and a Dance Party.

Follow **Down Syndrome Niagara** on Facebook, or on our Instagram page **@down.syndrome.niagara** for updates on upcoming events and community initiatives.

Bethesda Services – Alyson Wilson

N/A

Autism Ontario Niagara Region - Alexandria Attree

N/A

Mainstream – Lorraine Smith

Created full time position which will focus on offering social and leisure opportunities for the people we support (people after high school looking for friendship, girlfriends or boyfriends) High school plays a very important role in socializing.

Journey to Belonging guidelines from ministry – over the next few months we are planning discussions focusing on how we can improve and build on the supports being offered through the Options Niagara program as well as how the Journey to Belonging document will impact the delivery and quality of supports we offer.

Bethesda Services – Alyson Wilson

N/A

Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet) – Rita Smith

During the summer 30 children (under 12 years) and 15 teens (13 to 18 years) were supported in summer camps by Community Living. The children attended programs of their choice and CLPCW provided support workers to attend with them to ensure true inclusion.

Partnering with Bethesda in hosting “Game Night” at the center for Community Living in Port Colborne. We are hoping this will be the start of Bethesda offering groups and programs in Port Colborne as transportation to Thorold is difficult to many families.

Kids are taking part in “Badges on the Boarder International Torch Run” on Wednesday September 13th to celebrate the commitment of local law enforcement to the Special Olympic movement. (flyer attached)

Community Living (Welland/Pelham) – Monique Somma

N/A

E. STUDENT REPORT

Student Senate Representative –

N/A

F. STAFF REPORTS

Secondary Principal – A. Felice

All staff are getting used to the new students coming in. Excited to see everyone hustle and bustle

Elementary Principal – S. Walsh

Transitioning our JK students. It is great to see a big increase in numbers entering our schools.

Student Support Department - Danny Giancola

1. New Staff in Student Support

We welcome staff in new roles to our Student Support Team.

Ann Marie Criddle – Student Support Coordinator

Anthony Di Toro – Behaviour Resource Teacher

Tina Hornick – (Applied Behaviour Analysis Specialized Education Program (ABASE)
classroom teacher

Kristina Koziej (Ko-zej) – Educational Assistant for ABASE

Andrew Thompson – Educational Assistant for ABASE

We look forward to working with them.

2. Student Support August Transition Team

Through additional Ministry Funding, Student Support implemented a transition support team for the period of Aug. 22 – Aug. 31. Approximately 23 staff members joined the team to support students, families, teachers and administrators with students new to school or returning to school this September. We thank all staff who were involved in this program and wish all students the best of luck in their new beginning.

3. Empower

As the final step in our three-year plan, all 48 Niagara Catholic elementary schools are scheduled to deliver Empower reading intervention program to student candidates this school year. We welcome eleven new staff to the role of ERT and Empower Reading teacher.

4. Our Student Support Department Staff meeting is being held tomorrow at the CEC. This meeting will highlight our success to date and to also review some of our plans and direction for this upcoming year.

5. Our first ERT and Special Education Classroom Teacher staff meeting

will be held Sept. 13 where staff will gather in-person here at the CEC. A full agenda is planned that includes presentations from outside agencies and a “Refresher Training” session for Empower.

6. TIPS at Saint Michael and Denis Morris

This past May, Niagara Catholic supported students in grade eleven and twelve who were/are transitioning to post-secondary education this Fall or in Sept. 2024. The TIPS program was offered in partnership with the Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region to help support and prepare secondary students with their post-secondary transition. Nine students registered for this one-day program in two locations in Niagara Catholic.

7. Let’s Read After-School Reading Program

Student Support and the Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region (LDANR) have partnered to offer a grade two to four Reading Program. This FREE program is offered exclusively to grade two, three and four students who require further intervention to improve their literacy skills. Students work on foundational literacy skills such as phonics principles, sight word knowledge, and reading fluency. The Program will commence Oct. 24 and will include fifteen, one-hour sessions of intensive instruction.

8. (Applied Behaviour Analysis Specialized Education Program (ABASE) Update

Our ABA team is currently finalizing the entry process to the ABASE program and working through profiles to determine the students that would best be served in this program. This program aims to target primary and early junior grade students to provide focused and intensive behaviour and self-regulation strategies with the goal of furthering their independence in their homeschool classroom.

9. Music with Mendelt Continues

Niagara Catholic welcomes back Mendelt to our Secondary Special Education classrooms. Mendelt is a music therapist and has been providing weekly virtual music session to our 8 secondary schools since January 2022, with the support of our Central Staff.

10. The Deaf/Hard of Hearing Staff workshop

Itinerant Program Resource Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing have collaborated with our Provincial School partners to offer an interactive, virtual workshop for staff who are supporting deaf/hard of hearing students. This workshop is taking place virtually on Sept. 26.

11. LDAO August Conference

We would like to thank the LDAO for providing fifteen Niagara Catholic staff with opportunity to participate in their August Conference, at no cost. Our staff were eager and grateful to participate in these virtual sessions which strengthened their knowledge in the area of Learning Disabilities and the strategies that best support these students.

G. TRUSTEE REPORTS – Trustee Marino

Good evening everyone. I hope that you had an enjoyable and restful summer with an opportunity of carrying out things on your “I want to do list”, rather than your “I must do list”.

I don't have anything earth shattering to report this evening, but I would like to reflect just a bit on some recent school board functions that I as a trustee was happy and privileged to attend.

One was the “Catch the Spirit”, celebrating excellence evening, that honours students, staff and alumni who have been, or who are now, products of the Niagara Catholic District School Board system. Catholic Leadership, Catholic Faith, Mission, Values, Vocation, call to service areas of the Catholic Community, Family Commitment, Community Relations and Involvement, distinguished success in adult life are all qualities that contributed to the honours of award for the recipients. And there were some excellent examples of Catholic education individuals with these qualities who were honoured that evening.

I also was pleased by the opportunity of attending three graduation ceremonies.

One was for the combined students attending Pope Francis Secondary, Saint Kateri Tekawitha Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools, Niagara Link-Community Outreach, and Young

Parent students. It was a delight to witness the students proudly sprint up for the diploma presentation, and pause for a memorable photo, flashing a joyful smile of accomplishment.

The other two ceremonies were for graduating students from Saint Paul and Saint Michael Secondary Schools.

The experience that I enjoyed at all four ceremonies as a trustee of the Niagara Catholic District School Board was proof positive of something that I have known for some time, that we have an administrative staff, principals, teachers, support staff and remarkable students that make up quality ingredients resulting in a recipe for a Catholic Education system that is second to none. The pride of students, parents, relatives, friends and Niagara Catholic staff members permeated the air as diplomas, awards and scholarships were presented at the graduation ceremonies. And there were cheers, and accolades when accomplishments were read out including marks as high as 99.5%.

On Wednesday, September 20, the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education will hold one of its major fundraising events in support of students in need and scholarships. Since the classics first tee-off, over 750 scholarships have been awarded and support has been provided to other outreach programs including "Seeing Clearly" which provides funding for the purchase of eye glasses, nutritious food funding, as well as assistance for medical bills to list just a few examples. We are pleased that this classic has developed into one of Niagara's premier tournaments attracting many annual repeat golfers.

H. NCPIC REPORT

N/A

I. NOTICES OF MOTION

N/A

J. INFORMATION ITEMS

N/A

K. MOMENT OF SILENCE / REFLECTION OF LIFE

K. NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, October 4, 2023 at 6:30 pm

L. ADJOURNMENT: 7:35 pm

Motion to Adjourn: L. Smith all in favour/no opposed