

NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



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We are a
**CHRIST-CENTERED
CATHOLIC FAITH community**
that celebrates diversity
and fosters SPIRITUAL GROWTH,
inspiring ALL to REACH
their FULL potential in
MIND, BODY, & SPIRIT

ENCOUNTERING SOULS
AND OPENING MINDS
SO that **all students**
SUCCEED

Natalia Benoit Found in Breach of Board's Trustee Code of Conduct Policy

Niagara Catholic District School Board Trustee Natalia Benoit breached the Board's [Trustee Code of Conduct Policy](#) and has been barred from attending all Board and Committee meetings until the end of the school year. She was further censured and relieved of all duties and roles as a trustee until June 30, 2024.

The decision was made by the majority of trustees in a recorded vote during a Special Board Meeting on January 23, 2024. Board Chair Danny Di Lorenzo, Vice-Chair Rhianon Burkholder, and trustees Larry Huibers, Douglas Joyner, Jim Marino, and Paul Turner voted in support of the report which found in favour of a complaint submitted by Trustee Turner last summer. Trustee Joe Bruzzese voted against the findings of independent investigators Parker Sim LLP.

During the period of censure, Trustee Benoit will not receive correspondence from the Board. Under the *Education Act*, she will continue to receive her honorarium from the Board. Trustee Benoit has at least 14 days to appeal.

Trustee Turner submitted his complaint to the Board in June, in response to Trustee Benoit's actions outside of the May 23 Board Meeting at the Catholic Education Centre.

Trustees were asked to consider whether they agreed with the report which found Trustee Benoit to be in breach of Niagara Catholic's Trustee Code of Conduct Policy, and, if they did, to determine a suitable sanction. A third motion was added, which stated that the Board "resolves to disassociate itself from any actions or statements previously made by Trustee Benoit." In recorded votes, all trustees voted in favour of the five-month suspension, and Trustee Bruzzese abstained from voting on the third motion.

"While I am sorry that we had to go through this process, I believe we made the correct decision," said Chair Di Lorenzo. "I am grateful for the thoughtful and compassionate comments made by the trustees during our deliberations. The focus must be on education, and how best to move forward in support of all students and staff at Niagara Catholic."

Trustee Benoit, who has been on a leave from her role as trustee since September, attended the meeting virtually. She did not speak.

In accordance with Niagara Catholic policy, the report by Parker Sim will be available when the approved minutes of the meeting are posted online. A livestream of the meeting is available [here](#).

Niagara Catholic's Compliance Audit Committee will meet at the Catholic Education Centre at 427 Rice Road in Welland at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, January 31, 2024, to consider the audit reports of Trustee Benoit and trustee candidate Jolanta Pawlak's campaign expenditures. This meeting is open to the public and will be available through livestream.

DATE ISSUED: January 24, 2024