



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

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 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/>

APPROVED

ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Land Acknowledgement –

*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

3. Roll Call

Members	Affiliations	Yes	Excused
Somma, Monique	Community Living (Welland/Pelham) - CHAIR	x	
Cipriano, Madeline	Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region	x	
Maxwell, Michelle	Niagara Children’s Centre	x	
<i>vacant</i>	Pathstone Mental Health		
Andrea Pede	Down Syndrome Niagara		
Attree, Alexandria	Autism Ontario Niagara Region		
<i>vacant</i>	Indigenous Representative		
<i>vacant</i>	Mainstream		

Smith, Rita	Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet)	x	
Wilson, Alyson	Bethesda Services		
Donato, Krystine	Community Representative	x	
Joyner, Doug	Trustee of the Board		
Marino, Jim	Trustee of the Board	x	
Filice, Adele	Principal, Secondary	x	
Walsh, Susy	Principal, Elementary	x	
Pizzoferrato, Gino	Superintendent of Education	x	
Alli, Babra	Student Senate Representative	x	
Di Gioia, Jim	Coordinator of Student Support		
Giancola, Danny	Coordinator of Student Support	x	
Criddle, Ann Marie	Coordinator of Student Support		

Observers	Affiliations	Yes	Excused
Keighan, Kelly	Speech-Language Pathologist		
Brochu, Grace	Student Support Facilitator		
Nemcko, Julia	ABA Lead	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	x	
Loughhead, Brooke	ABA Lead		
Davies, Elizabeth	Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary	x	

4. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: Alyson Wilson

Seconded by: Madeline Cipriano

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 October 4, 2023

Moved by: Alyson Wilson

Seconded by: Babra Alli

7. Minutes from November 1, 2023 shared for information only. (no quorum)

8. Gino welcomed Babra Alli – Student Representative to SEAC

B. PRESENTATIONS

1. SEA Coaching/Screening/Reading Intervention – Bryan Nesbitt

2. ABASE Classroom Update – Julia Nemcko, ABA Lead; Tina Hornick, BRT

C. AGENDA ITEMS

Chair's Report – Chair Somma

December brings much business and preparation. We have spent over a year preparing for the goals that are in the works this year and I am very happy to share this work as we welcome back Madeline as SEAC rep for LDANR! We have collectively worked hard to support children in various capacities and have learned a great deal about how SEACs can support school boards to better meet the needs of students and families. I look forward to what 2024 has in store for Niagara Catholic!

Update on GOAL #1 – Improve Transitions for all students (into school for the first time from elementary to secondary)

Adele: Invited grade 7 & 8 families to open house Nov 30. 300 attended. Formal invites were sent to feeder schools. Good turnout. Mainstream presented, Grace Brochu and AL Monachino presented/supported. Kids used sensory room. We introduced them to Holy Cross and staff they will see as they transition. Principals and teachers also attended. Next opportunity for elementary spec ed students would be during exam times. Provides opportunity to meet EA's.

Update on GOAL #2 – Improve/promote access to and knowledge of services outside of the school board and organizations including paraprofessionals and government funding options

Susy: Goal is January to go into February newsletter.

D. AGENCY REPORTS

Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – Madeline Cipriano

LDANR has opened their Winter program applications for the program season which will begin the week of January 29th. We currently still have spots available in our online JUMP Math Program as well as BEST and our Social programs.

Wrapping up our Let's READ program in partnership with Niagara Catholic and the feedback has been very positive, with some parents sad that we will not be continuing the program into the Winter.

Some families have applied to our Reading Rocks program so they will continue on with our organization which is great to see.

Seen great success in our new Parent and Student Socials with many of the kids in our student social becoming friends over the 4 sessions together.

Fortunate to have the Resource Consultant from Trillium come speak at our Parent Social.

Hosting an Ice Dogs Fundraiser on December 14th for our supporters to attend.

Niagara Children's Centre – Michelle Maxwell

Pathstone Mental Health – Vacant

N/A

Down Syndrome Niagara –Andrea Pede

N/A

Autism Ontario Niagara Region - Alexandria Attree

Celebrating 50 years!

Mainstream – Vacant

N/A

Bethesda Services – Alyson Wilson

Thanks to connections made through participation in SEAC, representatives from Bethesda attended the Open House at Lakeshore Catholic High School and the parent, teacher interview night at St. Christopher in November to share information about funded transition services that are available at Bethesda for youth and their caregivers.

Bethesda is hosting a Caregiver Appreciation Dinner on December 20, 2023. Amici's is donating their hall for the evening and the Culinary Program at Niagara College is providing the meal. We will host 160 caregivers and show our appreciation for all they do for their loved ones.

Please visit our website for a listing of the extra holiday program offered to children, youth and families registered at Bethesda.



The flyer features a background image of a child in winter gear. It includes a registration notice, a list of activities with dates and times, and a 'Swipe for details' button.

Free registration
for families registered with Ontario Autism Program (OAP) and Children's Behaviour Services (CBS)

Activity	Date	Time
Holiday Family Photos	December 5 and 12	5:00pm - 7:00pm
Holiday Crafting	December 7	6:00pm - 7:30pm
Holiday at Balls Falls	December 9	9:00am - 12:00pm
Open Mic Night	December 13	6:00pm - 7:30pm
Paint Night	December 19	5:00pm - 6:30pm
Teen Dance	December 21	6:00pm - 8:00pm
Cookie Decorating	December 29	9:30am - 11:30am
Teen Chill	January 2	1:00pm - 4:00pm
Frosty Fun PD Days	January 2, 3 and 4	9:00am - 12:00pm and 1:00pm - 4:00pm
Holiday Drop-In: Pancakes and Pajamas	January 5	10:00am - 12:00pm

Swipe for details

Bethesda offers a variety of different **Foundational Family Services and Supports** that are available to families registered with the Ontario Autism Program or Children's Behaviour Services. Our latest Service Guide can be found on our website - <https://bethesdaservices.com/en/youth/home>. All of the services are free and immediately available to families! Services include:

- Caregiver and Youth Workshops
- Social Recreational Groups
- Clinical Group Services
- Family Activities and Community Events
- Family and Sibling Support Groups
- Brief Consultation Services (SLP, OT, ABA and Mental Health Services)

For more information about the services offered at

Bethesda, please contact our Service Coordinators at (905) 684-6918, ext. 170 or serviceinfo@bethesdaservices.com.

Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet) – Rita Smith

N/A

Community Living (Welland/Pelham) – Monique Somma
No report

E. STUDENT REPORT

Student Senate Representative - Babra
Met yesterday – planning next special ed semi formal

F. STAFF REPORTS

Secondary Principal – A. Felice

Notre Dame:

We just finished our swimming season for the year. We had three of our special education students participate in weekly practices at the YMCA as well as in two meets at Brock University.

Our swimmers competed in their first mini meet at Brock University in the month of November in the para 50m free style and para 50m back. They also just competed at Brock this past week at the Notre Dame Relay Meet. All swimmers swam in the para 50m back, the rookie relay and the para relay which allowed for them to swim with many of the other students on our team.

Lakeshore Catholic

- On Tuesday, December 5th we have arranged for Community Living Port Colborne to complete STAR training with our special education students.
- LCHS enjoyed a very successful Open House evening this past Thursday, November 30, 2023. We arranged a Special Education Support Hub that included representatives from Bethesda, Contact Niagara and both Community Living Fort Erie/Port Colborne. Many rich discussions were had with families about in-school and community support(s) available for those students who are on an IEP and/or have special needs.
- On December 1 our class started a new Christmas/Advent initiative, called “The Spectacular Christmas Advent Event”. For 15 straight school days, students from our class take turns reading Christmas movie quotes each morning over the PA system. Classes are invited to send one student to the special education class to have the chance to reveal who said the quote and which movie it is from. All of the student participants are invited into the classroom to mingle and get to know our students. Each morning a winner is selected and given a small classroom prize, as well as a point towards their class running total. Not only are our students interacting with other students, they are helping read the quotes and tabulate the scores. A grand prize will be awarded to the class who has the most points. The special education class will be preparing the prize (fresh made cookies and milk). On December 21st our class will share in this treat along with the winning class in the school cafeteria.
- Each morning in the great hall our special education students participate in a 20 minute DPA (daily physical activity) session lead by Mr. Oort. The routine involves basic physical activity exercises and stretches focusing on balance, coordination, cardiovascular fitness, and cooperation/listening skills. For the holiday season our mainstream classes have been invited to join in, which has provided wonderful social interaction opportunities (and proud moments) for our students.

Holy Cross

- Grade 7 & 8 Open house was successful- invites went out to all Holy Cross feeder schools
- Special education transition planning meeting was held in our new space
- Mainstream attended and provided families with the transition tool kit
- Grace Brochu and Al Monachino attended from the Student Support team
- The presentation was well received by parents

2. Elementary Principal – S. Walsh

N/A

Student Support Department - Danny Giancola

Next Educational Resource Teacher and Special Education Classroom Teacher meeting

will be held Dec. 13 here at the CEC. This meeting will be specifically for secondary staff. The day will focus on Pathway planning for students and a glimpse of the new electronic IEP.

The Nov./Dec. Gifted module

Took place Nov. 21, 23, 30 and Dec. 1. Students learned about WeVideo software, focusing on using green screens, a technique used to create special effects in films. Students took on various roles involved in filmmaking while collaborating in small groups to write a short script and film scenes to make their finished product. Students will also had an opportunity to share their creations once prepared.

Full BMS certification

Is underway for many employee groups including principals, vice principals, educational resource teachers, secondary special education classroom teachers and Student Support Staff. These groups have completed the theory portion of BMS and are scheduled to receive the physical certification at an upcoming date. Our Educational Assistants, Early Child Educators, Library Technicians and Child and Youth Workers will be receiving this important training in January 2024. Thank you to all those that facilitated the training sessions and those that participated.

Lexia PowerUp

Professional Learning Sessions were offered throughout November to help staff with continued implementation of this reading program. The virtual session focused on introduction, data interpretation or a deep dive into the program, depending on the user's knowledge of Lexia PowerUp. All sessions have been recorded and will be made available to all staff for access.

Superintendent Pizzoferrato – To expand on the transitions and pathways planning we brought in an outside consultant. It was a positive experience for everyone involved. In the delivery of the model in secondary schools evidence differently in our schools.

Pointed recommendations to suggest a need for us to shift slowly in a safe environment

Extended an invitation to our secondary principals to participate in a pilot. We are looking for input at five sites. There will be an extension to elementary school as well.

Look forward to bringing you update in future months with how we are progressing. We are excited about the possibilities.

G. TRUSTEE REPORTS –Trustee Marino

The Board of Trustees held its organizational meeting last evening and both the Chair Danny DiLorenzo and Vice Chair Rhianon Burkholder were re-elected by acclamation. In his acceptance remarks, Chair DiLorenzo was very positive in acknowledging the collective dedication of the entire board in its mission, values and commitment to the Catholic faith. The chair was emphatically positive and encouraging by his remarks of working together collectively and collaboratively. In doing so, student achievement will be improved and an environment will be created where our faith is of the utmost importance in the development of every child. The board chair was confident that collective efforts would result in significant strides in the students aspiring to achieve their educational, spiritual and emotional goals, and stated equity and inclusion are fundamental principles that guide our faith and they shall remain the cornerstone of the board. He went on to say that decisions that impact students must always be prioritized as to what is best for each individual and one of the Board's top priorities is to ensure that no student is left behind. Chair DiLorenzo stated that with a continued focus on the strategic plan in a commitment to enhancing the educational experience for every student attending Niagara Catholic District School Board schools, and in moving forward, accountability and transparency will be paramount.

Some good news was delivered when the board was informed of another successful annual Pilgrimage fundraiser by Niagara Catholic District School Board Secondary Schools. To date \$98,000 has been collected that will assist Developing Countries.

Prior to the organizational meeting trustees heard a presentation by Dr. Niigaan Sinclair former head of the Department of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba, and currently holds the faculty of Arts Professorship in Indigenous Knowledge of Aesthetics. Dr. Sinclair worked with our Board's indigenous education Team last year and continues to do so as part of the Board's Indigenous Professional Development Series. He has spoken to staff, students and the Board's senior team with presentations about Indigenous Society, the many problems, injustices and inequities it experienced, and stressed the need for reconciliation and education. Dr. Sinclair stated reconciliation is possible and it will all come from love. He said Jesus took a lead in multiculturalism, the Catholic church has an important role to play in the reconciliation process, noting that all human beings matter, and are all meant to live together. He noted the special love and understanding that Pope Francis has shown for the Indigenous people and said history was made this past October when the first premier of Native Decent was elected Premier of Manitoba.

H. NCPIC REPORT

Catholic School Council Chairs and Co-Chairs were invited to attend the NCPIC meeting of November 2, 2023. A meet and greet was held at 6:00 p.m.

Highlights of the meeting included:

- The Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee was established and all members participated in the annual commissioning, as per the By-Laws of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee.
- Kim Kinney, Superintendent of Education presented the Niagara Catholic Math Achievement Action Plan to support student achievement in Mathematics for K to 12 students.
- Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells, Superintendent of Education provided a presentation on the role and responsibilities of Catholic School Councils and Chairs/Co-Chairs.

- Director Cipriano, encouraged all parents /guardians to review the *Niagara Catholic Chronicle* to keep informed and connected to all of the good news and happenings throughout Niagara Catholic.

NCPIC Community Representatives and Parent/Guardian Nomination Forms for the 2024-2025 school year will be available at schools and on the Board website in April 2024.

The next meeting of the NCPIC will take place on January 11, 2024 at 6:30 p.m., at the Catholic Education Centre.

On behalf of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee, we wish all Niagara Catholic parents/guardians, students, staff and all stakeholders a Blessed Christmas and Happy New Year!

I. NOTICES OF MOTION

N/A

J. INFORMATION ITEMS

N/A

K. MOMENT OF SILENCE / REFLECTION OF LIFE

L. NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, January 10, 2023 at 6:30 pm

M. ADJOURNMENT: 8:35 PM

Motion to Adjourn: Madeline Cipriano

Seconded by: Alyson Wilson