



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

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 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/>

**UNAPPROVED
 FOR INFORMATION ONLY
 NO QUORUM**

ROUTINE MATTERS

1. **Land Acknowledgement** – Superintendent Pizzoferrato
*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 | |
| 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 | | |
| T.B.D. | Mainstream | | |
| 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 |
|---|--|-----|---------|
| Grzybala, Kathy (for 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) | | x |
| Hornick, Tina | Special Initiative Teacher | | x |
| Fuller, Kayla | ABA Facilitator | | x |
| Loughhead, Brooke | ABA Lead | | x |
| Davies, Elizabeth | Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary | x | |

4. Approval of the Agenda – NO QUOROM

Moved by:

Seconded by:

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 September 6, 2023 – NO QUOROM

Moved by:

Seconded by:

B. PRESENTATIONS

1. Niagara College – Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE) Program –
Jessica Berez, CICE Academic Portfolio Manager

2. Math Achievement Action Plan (MAPS) – Kim Kinney, Superintendent of Education

C. AGENDA ITEMS

Chair's Report – Chair Somma

This committee brings together individuals from various units within the board who support accessibility for students, staff, and community members accessing board resources.

[Accessibility Multi-Year Strategic Plan \(2022-2027\)](#)- this is also available on the NCDSB board website. This is the guide developed and provided for all units.

Some highlights include: mandatory training for every employee; retrofitting schools to be accessible, including accessible portables at every school.

New website is being carefully designed to include required accessibility standards and more inclusive language use, readability and accessibility.

Accessibility Awareness Plan- received a \$140,000 grant to further the accessibility awareness initiatives from last year. Proposed a focus on parents and removing barriers for accessibility; targeting the secondary level.

Health and Safety- focus on emergency evacuation protocols for students with disabilities, specifically in multi-level schools; in consultation with Niagara Emergency Services.

GOAL # 1

Improve transitions for all students (into school for the first time, from elementary to secondary, from secondary to post-secondary and beyond, integrated transition plan).

Action items:

1. Holy Cross will invite grade 7 families to their open house later this month (Nov. 30) specifically to target students with special education needs and their parents/guardians): this will serve as an example/pilot for other schools to implement in the future. Adele is requesting central staff personnel on site to offer information and to answer questions for families.
2. Gino's team inquiring to elementary and secondary schools to gain information about what processes they engage in regularly related to transition planning/ tracking and sharing of information between elementary to secondary and teachers.

GOAL # 2

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

Action items:

1. Complete the google form for your organization if not done yet (will go to Elizabeth/Michelle/Monique)
2. Michelle Maxwell (Niagara Children's Centre) volunteered to review the template and be the first newsletter agency (February 2024)

MACSE Update – Superintendent Pizzoferrato

Last meeting was a great working meeting. Following that meeting we had the opportunity to go over the Ministry Advisory Council Survey Report. This comes to the Board 3 times a year.

The feedback you provided was consolidated into a one-page report (included in the minutes) and received at the Committee of the Whole meeting on October 10, 2023. It was forwarded onto OCSTA who has a seat at the Ministry's table.
Invite you to next opportunity.

Future Off-Site Meetings – Superintendent Pizzoferrato
We are open to attending at your location giving your agency an opportunity to showcase if you are able to support.
April/May/June meetings open for hosting.

D. AGENCY REPORTS

Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – Emily Glencross

Niagara Children's Centre – Michelle Maxwell

We had an extremely successful 9th annual Superhero Run on October 14th, raising over \$112,000 for Niagara Children's Centre. Despite some rainy weather we had a great time!

- Our 3rd annual Trunk or Treat event hosted in partnership with Warrior Kids was also a great success with over 400 participants! This barrier-free event continues to grow each year and we are so happy to participate! You can learn more about the event here:

<https://youtu.be/CcempQVKJnA?si=bO3MgJWf-T-1on6Z>

Please continue to share our Event Calendar with families:

<https://www.niagarachildrencentre.com/calendar> including our Event Guide:

https://issuu.com/niagarachildrencentre/docs/branded_print_out_fall_events

Pathstone Mental Health – Tara Kelly

N/A

Down Syndrome Niagara –Andrea Pede

N/A

Autism Ontario Niagara Region - Alexandria Attree

Celebrating 50 years!

Locally:

- We are selling comedy tickets for November 18, 2023 to Showtime Comedy and Entertainment in St. Catharines with headliner Rob Bebenek. Tickets are \$20 each and can be purchased online or connect with me to purchase in person.
- On Nov 28th MR MIKES in Welland is hosting a Giving Tuesday Dinner event and will give a portion of dinner sales to Autism Ontario South Region – more information to come on this - save the Date!

Mainstream – Lorraine Smith

N/A

Bethesda Services – Alyson Wilson

Bethesda and the Niagara Children’s Centre provided service to 87 children across five classrooms through the Ontario Autism Program’s (OAP) **Entry to School Program (ETS)** between March and August.

ETS is a six-month curriculum-based service that helps prepare children to enter kindergarten or grade 1 for the first time. Children received up to 15 hours a week of interdisciplinary group service.

The team prepared Integrated Transition to School Reports that were shared with caregivers and school staff.

The ETS Program also includes consultations to families and educators to help support the child’s transition to school throughout the first term. Consultations from members of the Interdisciplinary team are still available. Educators can request consultations by emailing entrytoschool@bethesdaservices.com.

Bethesda will be attending the Open House at Lakeshore Catholic High School in November to share information about funded transition services that are available to youth and their caregivers.

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

1. Library Tutoring Program - tutoring starts next Wednesday November 8, 2023. 12 children will have access to a tutor (1 on 1) for 45 minutes for next 6 weeks. This will happen again in January 2024
2. Annual Fundraiser Gala Auction is November 18, 2023

E. STUDENT REPORT

Student Senate Representative

N/A

F. STAFF REPORTS

Secondary Principal – A. Felice

All schools are in the process of contacting and scheduling meetings for all parents/guardians who would like to discuss and provide input for their child's draft IEPs for Semester 1.

Blessed Trinity:

1. Students from our Special Education Classroom are continuing their Cop-op placements at the Gateway Centre and at a daycare positioned in St Martin Catholic Elementary School
2. An additional student from Special Education Classroom continues to participate daily in the Horticulture APC course off-site
3. Several of the students from our Special Education Classroom continue to help to organize, stock and then deliver our “Grab and Go” Breakfast Program to students each day.

Elementary Principal – S. Walsh

N/A

Student Support Department - Danny Giancola

Upcoming Nov. 24 PD Day

Student Support Staff will be hosting all Niagara Catholic Educational Assistants and Intervenors, Elementary and Secondary ERTs and Secondary Special Education Class Teachers for our upcoming PD day on November 24th. Highlights planned for the day include a presentation on Accessibility and Inclusion from the Rick Hanson Foundation. This presentation will provide our staff with a further understanding about the need to build communities where everyone can go everywhere and to be a Difference Maker. We hope this time will further broaden their perspective regarding equity and inclusion.

We are also offering a presentation by our own Board lawyer on this same topic of accessibility and the responsibilities of school boards in Ontario. The day will also include flexible workshops led by our central staff where participants will be making-and-taking visuals and resources to support students with their personal communication goals. We hope these practical workshops will directly support the good work they are doing back in their school.

Select staff will also be working with our Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Blind-Low Vision on specific activities involving *myASLTech* which is a unique suite of assistive technology tools enhancing communication.

Our next Educational Resource Teacher and Special Education Classroom Teacher meeting will be held Nov. 29 here at the CEC. The day will include BMS Training, a presentation from Contact Niagara regarding the services they provide, Jessica from Niagara College again presenting information on the Community Integration Through Cooperative Education (CICE) program, a presentation regarding our SEA coaching module provided by LearnStyle who is one of our close

vendor partners which supports students to use their assistive technology. The day will also include important updates by our central team.

Let's Read After-School Reading Program

The Let's Read After-School Reading Program in partnership with the LDANR is off to a great start with over 50 students participating from across the Board at four different school sites. Eight Niagara Catholic teachers along with an LDANR facilitator are supporting each program with intensive and targeted reading instruction.

Niagara Catholic will be starting the process of completing Psycho-Educational Assessments

for students that have been referred by the school and supported by our central team. The process for an assessment is extensive and deliberate so that the best possible interventions are provided to the student and school staff. Pryor Linder and Associates is our contracted agency that will continue to complete our assessments this school year.

Superintendent Pizzoferrato

3 sites in Welland, 1 Niagara Falls,

I want committee to know we have come out of consultation. We looked at a number of sites to compare services offered at our schools. Some things to be celebrated. Report to be shared with secondary administrators. We will work through the feedback and how it impacts each site. Visits very positive. Opportunities to talk to principals, students and staff. Assessors connected well with staff.

G. TRUSTEE REPORTS – Trustee Joyner

N/A

H. NCPIC REPORT

Next meeting Thursday, November 2, 2023

I. NOTICES OF MOTION

N/A

J. INFORMATION ITEMS

N/A

K. MOMENT OF SILENCE / REFLECTION OF LIFE

L. NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, December 6, 2023 at 6:30 pm

M. ADJOURNMENT: 8:30 pm

Motion to Adjourn: Chair Somma