

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
MEETING DATE**

PUBLIC SESSION

**TOPIC: UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE MEETING OF DECEMBER 9, 2025**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board receive the unapproved Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of December 9, 2025, as presented.



MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025

Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee of the Whole of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, held on Tuesday, December 9, 2025 in the Father Kenneth Burns c.s.c. Board Room, at the Catholic Education Centre, 427 Rice Road, Welland.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Vice-Chair Burkholder.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Opening Prayer

Opening Prayer was led by Trustee Marino

2. Roll Call

Vice-Chair Burkholder noted that all Trustees and Student Trustees were in attendance.

Trustee	Present	Present Electronically	Absent	Excused
Natalia Benoit	✓			
Joseph Bruzzese	✓			
Rhianon Burkholder	✓			
Danny Di Lorenzo	✓			
Larry Huibers	✓			
Doug Joyner	✓			
Jim Marino	✓			
Paul Turner	✓			
Student Trustees				
Taylor Sexton	✓			
Mason Pasma	✓			

The following staff were in attendance:

Camillo Cipriano, Director of Education; **Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells, Kim Kinney, Gino Pizzoferrato, Pat Rocca, Domenic Massi, Joseph Zaroda**, Superintendents of Education; **Giancarlo Vetrone**, Associate Director of Education – Corporate Services; **Julia Tiessen**, Executive Officer of Human Resources; **Anna Lisa Conidi**, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant, Corporate Services

3. **Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by Trustee Bruzzese

THAT the Committee of the Whole approve the Agenda of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of December 9, 2025, as presented.

CARRIED

4. **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

No Declaration of Conflict of Interest was declared with any items on the Agenda.

5. **Approval of Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of November 11, 2025**

Moved by Trustee Huibers

THAT the Committee of the Whole approve the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of November 11, 2025, as presented.

CARRIED

6. **Consent Agenda Items**

Trustee Marino requested Item 6.2 be held. This item was moved to Committee and Staff Reports Section C1.3 of the agenda.

6.1 **Staff Development Department Professional Development Opportunities**

Presented for information.

6.2 **Capital Projects Progress Report Update**

Presented for information.

6.3 **In Camera Items G1**

Moved by Trustee Marino

THAT the Committee of the Whole adopt consent agenda items.

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATIONS

C. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

1. **Monthly Updates**

1.1 Student Trustees' Update

Taylor Sexton and Mason Pasma, Student Trustees, presented a brief verbal update on the current activities of the Student Senate.

1.2 Senior Staff Good News Update

Senior Staff highlights included:

Superintendent Kim Kinney,

- On December 2nd, more than 90 classes joined author Karen Kiefer to hear *The Misfit Sock*, a story that highlights how those who feel left out are truly valuable. Inspired by her family's tradition of filling misfit socks with treats and prayers, Niagara Catholic District Schools began creating their own socks, writing daily gratitude prayers, and displaying them as part of Advent celebrations centered on kindness, prayer, and love.
- The Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française (DELF) is an internationally recognized certification from the French Ministry of Education that assesses proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing across standardized levels. For the past nine years, Niagara Catholic District School Board Grade 12 students have shown consistently strong achievement, with many challenging the rigorous A2 and B2 levels that qualify learners to study at French-speaking universities. The exam, is offer twice yearly in May and November. Niagara Catholic's Grade 12 students achieved impressive success rate. In 2023, 78 of 89 candidates were successful representing an 87.6% success rate. In 2024, 68 of 71 students achieved certification with a 95.8% success rate and in November 2025, 51 of 54 students were successful, resulting in a 94.4% success rate.

Superintendent Joseph Zaroda,

- Five female student athletes from this year's 2025-2026 graduating class at Blessed Trinity Catholic Secondary School have received Division One Scholarships for the next school year. These students will be continuing their academic and athletic careers at some of the most prestigious universities: Brynn Sartor Canisius University for Lacrosse, Aubrey Morrison Colgate University for Hockey, Chiara Nicolazzo Purdue University for Soccer, Aubrey Sartor Stanford University for Lacrosse and Olivia Wist University of Connecticut for Rowing.

1.3 Capital Projects Progress Report Update

Giancarlo Vetrone, Associate Director of Education – Corporate Services presented the Capital Projects Progress Report Update for information.

Associate Director Vetrone and Director Cipriano answered questions of the Trustees.

D. GOVERNANCE POLICIES

1. Governance Policies Prior to Vetting

1.1. Accessibility Customer Service Policy (800.8.1)

Superintendent Pizzoferrato, presented the Accessibility Customer Service Policy (800.8.1)

Superintendent Pizzoferrato answered questions of the Trustees.

The Committee of the Whole suggested the following amendments:

- Introduction - add “Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act”

The Committee of the Whole requests that the Accessibility Customer Service Policy (800.8.1) be amended and brought back to the Committee of the Whole Meeting in January 2026.

2. Governance Policy Review Schedule

Director Cipriano presented the Governance Policy Review Schedule.

E. INFORMATION

1. Trustee Information

F. OTHER BUSINESS

1. General Discussion to Plan for Future Action

- 1.1 Director Cipriano reminded Trustees to submit the Board Draft Committee Member form to Anna Lisa Conidi or directly to the Chair or Vice Chair before the January Committee of the Whole Meeting.

G. BUSINESS IN CAMERA

Addressed within consent agenda section.

Moved by Trustee Turner

THAT the Committee of the Whole move into the In Camera Session.

CARRIED

The Committee of the Whole moved into the In Camera Session of the Committee of the Whole Meeting at 7:00 p.m. and reconvened at 7:40 p.m.

H. REPORT ON THE IN-CAMERA SESSION

Moved by Trustee Huibers

THAT the Committee of the Whole report the motions from the In Camera Session of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of December 9, 2025.

CARRIED

SECTION B: STUDENT TRUSTEES EXCLUDED

Moved by Trustee Marino

THAT the Committee of the Whole approve the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting - In Camera Session (Section B: Student Trustees Excluded) held on November 11, 2025, as presented.

CARRIED (Item G1)

I. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Bruzzese

THAT the December 9, 2025 Committee of the Whole Meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Niagara Catholic District School Board held on
December 9, 2025.

Approved on **January 13, 2026.**

Rhianon Burkholder
Vice-Chair of the Board

Camillo Cipriano
Director of Education/Secretary -Treasurer

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
*DECEMBER 16, 2025***

PUBLIC SESSION

**TOPIC: APPROVED MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC) MEETING OF**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board receive the Approved Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of November 5, 2025, as presented for information.



NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

November 5, 2025

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, held on Wednesday, November 5, 2025 at 6:30 p.m., at the Catholic Education Centre, 427 Rice Road, Welland, ON L3C 7C1

Chair Monique Somma called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. **Land Acknowledgement**
Susy Walsh led the Land Acknowledgment
2. **Opening Prayer**
Chair Somma led the opening prayer
3. **Roll Call**

Members	Affiliations	Present In-person	Present Electronically	Excused	Absent
Jessica Thomas	Autism Ontario Niagara Region		X		
Alyson Wilson	Bethesda Services		X		
Monique Somma (CHAIR)	Community Living (Pelham/Welland)	X			
Sara Wencel & DJ Holmes	Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet)	X			
Andrea Pede	Down Syndrome Niagara				X
Aishah Sonekan	Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara				X
Erica Simmanivong-Elizarraras	Mainstream				X
Chris Tawil	Niagara Children's Centre		X		
Michelle Toy	Pathstone	X			
Patricia Ferrie	Inclusion West Niagara	X			
Community Representative					
Krystine Donato					X
Indigenous Representative					
Cindi Lee Ecker-Flagg			X		
Secondary Student Senate Representative					
Lucas Bishop			X		
Trustees					
Trustee, Rhianon Burkholder		X			
Trustee, Jim Marino				X	

Regrets Received: Trustee Marino

The following staff were in attendance:

Gino Pizzoferrato, Superintendent of Education, **Jenna Young**, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant

Guests/Staff Resources in attendance: Roxanne Rees, Nicole Royer, Tayler Sergenese, Grace Brochu, Ashley Prohaszka, Lisa Clark, Jessica Mastroianni, Susy Walsh, Ann Marie Criddle, Kelly Keighan, Tara Formisano, Trustee DiLorenzo, Tanya Jewell, Cynthia Peterson

4. **Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by: Trustee Burkholder

Seconded by: Jessica Thomas

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of November 5, 2025 as presented.

CARRIED

5. **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

No declarations of conflict of interest were declared with any item on the agenda.

6. **Approval of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes of October 1, 2025**

Moved by: Trustee Burkholder

Seconded by: Jessica Thomas

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of October 1, 2025 as presented.

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATIONS – Tanya Jewell, Autism Ontario

Tanya Jewell, an Ontario subject matter expert in education advocacy, gave a presentation on strengthening Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs). She discussed her role in training staff, volunteers, and communities on school advocacy and highlighted the importance of inclusive language around autism.

Her presentation focused on helping SEACs grow and collaborate effectively through key steps:

1. Co-creation & Reflection – Assess how the team works, define goals, and gather feedback using surveys or idea cards.
2. Planning – Turn insights into action plans, identify training and networking opportunities, and prepare motions thoughtfully.
3. Acting – Implement plans, engage with the community, and bring forward motions to drive change.
4. Tracking – Monitor motions, board responses, and outcomes to measure progress and celebrate successes.

Tanya emphasized that motions provide accountability and visibility, while effective SEACs rely on teamwork, clear communication, and understanding board policies. She shared numerous Ontario resources and guides on special education, stressing the value of community connections, legislation, and ongoing learning.

She concluded by encouraging feedback and offering continued support and training for SEACs across the province.

C. CHAIR'S REPORT-*Chair Somma*

Chair Somma reported:

- A letter received from Durham District School Board: Timing of Release of Core Education Funding Documents to School Boards:

“SEACs across the Province try to follow the calendar set out by PAAC on SEAC. This calendar indicates that Core Education Funding (formerly referred to as Grants for Student Needs) is typically released in March, which would allow for a draft budget to be presented to SEAC for consultation. This timing allows for SEACs to provide meaningful consultation on actual funding allocations and to participate in a fulsome way in public consultations.

- A motion was put forth by Chair Somma to circulate the letter to the committee for review and to revisit the topic at December's meeting.

Moved by: Trustee Burkholder

Seconded by: Alyson Wilson

THAT the letter from DDSB will be circulated to SEAC for review.

CARRIED

- Additional updates included plans for a December meeting with a social component, scheduling future presentations for the new year, and confirming that agency updates for school newsletters are finalized through the rest of the year. These newsletters aim to inform families about SEAC and community organizations that can support them.

D. AGENCY REPORTS

1. Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – *Aishah Sonekan*

No report.

2. Niagara Children's Centre – *Chris Tawil*

Chris Tawil reported:

- New CEO – Noella Klawitter – she joins us from Kids Inclusive Children's Treatment Centre in Kingston

- Successful Trunk or Treat event in October
 - Over 300 people attended for an accessible trick or treat event
- Volt Hockey Tournament this Saturday at Canada Games Park
 - Inclusive adapted hockey for individuals with a variety of disabilities
 - Local Niagara Stingrays team is participating
- Preparing for Transition to School process for 2026/2027 school year
 - Transition to school Information Session for caregivers on:
 - Nov 27 6:00-7:30 Niagara Children's Centre
 - Dec 3 9-11:30 Niagara Children's Centre
 - Jan 14 4:00-5:30 Virtual

3. Pathstone Mental Health – Michelle Toy

Michelle Toy reported:

- Pathstone Mental Health announced a new pediatric and well-being clinic led by Dr. Agnihotri, a community pediatrician specializing in child development and mental health. The clinic operates two days a week, focusing on six pillars of lifestyle medicine, including sleep, nutrition, activity, and stress management, with referrals made through primary care providers.
- Pathstone launched Project Plaid, honoring Amelia De Rocher, to raise awareness and funds for their walk-in clinic, with an upcoming IceDogs hockey fundraiser on November 20.

4. Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet) – Sara Wencel

Sara Wencel reported:

- Community Living Port Colborne has received approval to build a fully inclusive and accessible playground on a property in Port Colborne.
- They are currently collecting donations to fund the project.
- They will be attending the Grade 8 Open House at Lakeshore Catholic High School.
- They are interested in finding out about more resources or community nights hosted by the Niagara Catholic School Board that community members can attend.

5. Inclusion West Niagara – Patricia Ferrie

Patricia Ferrie reported:

- Weekend Overnight Respite Program Pilot
 - First Pilot: Next Saturday.
 - Second Pilot: December.
 - If the pilots are successful and staffing is built up, the program aims to roll out to be available every weekend starting in the New Year.

6. Down Syndrome Niagara - Andrea Pede

No report.

7. Mainstream - Erica Simmanivong-Elizarraras

No report.

8. Bethesda Services – Alyson Wilson

Alyson Wilson reported:

- **Upcoming Workshops:**

- **Picky Eating**

- This interactive workshop equips parents, caregivers, and clinicians with practical strategies to address picky eating in children. We'll explore a variety of positive approaches.

- DATE Wednesday, November 12

- TIME 6:30pm - 7:30pm

- **Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD)**

- Application Support - Our Service Coordinators will help to provide support with completing applications online for families who have not applied. Families are encouraged to bring their laptops and iPad's to complete applications, laptops will also be available on a first come, first served basis. This workshop is appropriate for families applying for the first time only.

- DATE Tuesday, November 18

- Afternoon: 1:30pm - 3:30pm

- Evening: 5:30pm - 7:30pm

- LOCATION: In Person at Bethesda

- Niagara Family Centre

- 3310 Schmon Parkway, Thorold

- **Understanding your Child's Diagnosis**

- Caregivers will learn about autism and how to best support their child.

- DATE/TIME Wednesday, November 26, 6:30pm - 7:30pm

- **Ontario Autism Program - Entry to School Program**

- Bethesda and the Niagara Children's Centre are serving 18 children in the Fall Entry to School Program that will run from September to the end of January 2026. The Fall program is offered at Bethesda's Niagara Family Centre.
- The children who graduated from the Spring program that ran from March – August 2025 transitioned to school in September. 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.

9. Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Jessica Thomas

Jessica Thomas reported:

- An update on the organization's current resources, events, and initiatives.
- Sharing Stories: Autism Ontario encourages family members or individuals with autism to share their stories by submitting them on the website, connecting with the media team to create a video, or participating in clips for Autism Awareness Month.
- Annual Report: The 2024-2025 annual report is available online.
- Upcoming Events & Webinars:
 - November 12th: A Paperwork Party to help families sign up for support/assistance for children with severe disabilities.
 - Webinar: Focused on everyday strategies for parents/caregivers, specifically covering toileting tips.
 - Many other webinars are available to live stream or watch on-demand, organized by geographical area (e.g., clicking 'South' for local events).
 - Parent Groups:
 - The Awesome Mom Group meets monthly (next meeting: November 20th).
 - The RAD Dads group date will be sent out via email for the upcoming session.
 - Online Resources:
 - School Collection: Available online, including information on IPRC, IEPs, and Ready, Set, Learn resources.
 - Parent Guides: Specifically, "Preparing for your child's special education" and the multi-book "Ready, Set, Learn" series for Kindergarten onward.
 - New resources for new diagnosis and supporting mental health.
- New Diagnosis Webinars: November 19th (New Diagnosis) and November 25th (Exploring Autism).
- Survey Opportunity: Autism Ontario is conducting a survey where parents can participate for a chance to win cash prizes: a \$50 draw for part one, one of four \$100 prizes, and two grand prizes of \$500. Details will be included in the meeting minutes.

10. Community Living (Welland/Pelham) – Monique Somma

Monique Somma reported:

- Two programs that are open to all children and teens, not just those supported by Community Living:
 1. Tutoring Program (Library Program):
 - Successful and fully funded to continue.
 - Open to all children, whether or not they are supported by the agency.
 - Runs on Wednesday nights.
 2. Teen/Young Adult Life Skills Program (Notre Dame):
 - Run out of Notre Dame High School.
 - Runs on Thursday nights (likely an hour to an hour and a half session).
 - A piloted program for this year, run by the Chaplain and a CYW. It focuses on a series of hands-on modules covering topics like financial literacy, media literacy, and hygiene (e.g., one session involved making soap).
 - The program is experimenting with different group configurations:
 - Currently running a Young Men/Boys Group (with 4 participants).
 - Will offer a Girls Only Group in the Winter.
 - Will offer a Mixed Group in the Spring.
 - There is space available for additional young ladies in the Winter session.

E. COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE REPORT - Krystine Donato

No report.

F. INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATIVE REPORT - Cindi Lee Ecker-Flagg

Cindi Lee Ecker-Flagg reported:

- Indigenous Voice was well attended with over 30 Indigenous students
- Currently in the middle of Treaty Week

G. SECONDARY STUDENT SENATE REPRESENTATIVE REPORT- Lucas Bishop

Lucas Bishop reported:

- Schools held a spirited week, culminating in a special Halloween dance at Denis Morris for students with special education.
- High schools recently held their annual pilgrimages.
- Holy Cross celebrated its 40th annual event.
- The largest event was the 50th Annual Pilgrimage at Notre Dame College School (Welland), which students from across the board attended.
- It was announced that the Notre Dame Pilgrimage has raised over \$3 billion over the years to help people in the developing world. All schools walked in solidarity on Sunday.

- Schools are currently recognizing Treaties Recognition Week.
- Next week, each school will have a celebration to mark Remembrance Day.
- In November and December, all high schools will hold Open Houses to welcome incoming Grade 9 students.
- The Student Senate is preparing for the Lead Out Loud Conference (Student Voice Conference 2025) happening at the end of November.
 - The conference will explore the power of equity, inclusion, and solidarity in shaping school culture.
- Interactive workshops and collaborative activities led by Harmony Movement will focus on understanding identities, bias, and being an ally to others.

H. STAFF REPORTS

1. Elementary Principal – Susy Walsh

Susy Walsh reported:

- The Student Support Resource Model pilot has gatewayed close to 200 students across 14 elementary schools.
- At the end of October, schools reviewed the data collected thus far to determine progress made for each of the students gatewayed.
- The Board Data Lead is currently consolidating all of the collected data and information, so additional details will be forthcoming.

2. Secondary Principal – Nicole Royer

Nicole Royer reported:

Recent Events:

Special Olympics Soccer Tournament

- October 9th at Denis Morris
- 4 schools participated: Saint Michael, Lakeshore, Holy Cross, Denis Morris
- Schools can enter teams with only special education students or unified teams with special education students and their peer helpers, rules are modified for helpers (maximum amount to score, must involve all team members, etc)
- Teams forward their team record to Special Olympics, will know in the future which teams move on to Provincial Special Olympics in May in London, Ontario
- Grade 12 leadership class from DM organized and ran the tournament for the students

Halloween Dance

- October 31st at Denis Morris
- All 8 high schools attended
- Many activities: photo booth, DJ, activities, crafts, pizza, snacks
- Peer helpers attended with the schools

- Grade 12 leadership class welcomed the schools as they arrived

Paving the Path to Work - March of Dimes Program

- Denis Morris is currently participating with 4 of their special education students
- Looking to continue offering the program to appropriate students yearly
- Students are enjoying the program
- Instructor presents once a week 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

WELPAC at Denis Morris

- Team members collectively share their unique abilities and seeking to include others and create safe and fun spaces for all students
- Busy currently implementing “Be the I in Kind” and Tech Free Fridays
- Tech Free Fridays in the cafeteria where students are invited to leave their phones in a designated area and then partake in various games and activities (UNO, Jenga, etc.)
- Therapy tails to return to the school
- Planning a paint and sip afterschool activity

3. Secondary Principal – Roxanne Rees

Roxanne Rees reported:

- Co-op education is a high school program that allows students to earn academic credits while gaining valuable workplace experience.
- Students are blocked out of regular school time (either morning or afternoon) for approximately 150 minutes (like two periods).
- The placement typically runs from September to January (or is done in the second semester at many schools).
- The placement is coordinated between the school's co-op teacher, the student, and the employer/supervisor at the organization.
- It helps students (especially those who are young and unsure) explore different career fields or paths, informing decisions about whether to pursue college, university, or enter the workforce directly.
- It can save money on future education if the student discovers a chosen path is not the right fit.
- It is a valuable opportunity for students who are not "book and pen" learners to thrive in a hands-on environment, building pride and confidence.
- From Grade 9 onward, there is a constant focus on post-high school transition (to post-secondary or the workforce).
- Special Education teachers, resource teachers, administration, guidance, parents/guardians, and the student work together to set goals using a backward design model: if the goal is to enter the workforce, what skills are needed for success?
- Co-op provides vital steps for students to gain confidence, independence, and a sense of pride. It builds on life skills taught at school (like taking the

bus or budgeting groceries) to help them eventually sustain full-time or part-time employment.

- It extends the feeling of being included in the school community to the larger community, helping them establish relationships that last beyond graduation.
- The program enhances crucial skills established in the classroom, such as communication, teamwork, and task completion. These skills are reinforced through the partnership with the co-op supervisor and educational assistant (EA).
- High schools average at least one co-op student per semester and that many placements are second semester. Placements are open-ended and based on the student's skills, ranging from:
 - Retail stores and grocery stores
 - Restaurants
 - Elementary schools (supporting teachers)
 - Nursing homes (at one high school)
 - Higher-functioning students may have different placements than those requiring an EA for the entire period.

4. Student Support – Ann Marie Criddle

Ann Marie reported:

- ERT and Special Education Classroom Teacher meeting
Our November Student Support Learning Session was held yesterday at the CEC. day highlighted updates to the Niagara Children's Centre – School Based Rehabilitation SLP referral process, information on services and upcoming Fall/Winter programs from the Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region, as well as a breakout session on the basics of administration of the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement with Student Support Resource Teachers, and much more.
- "SNAP" (Supporting Neurodiversity through Adaptive Programming)
Niagara Catholic schools had a chance to register for the Fall Session of SNAP offered through Brock University. This program includes a wide range of activities such as educational gymnastics, dance and movement education, games, and other activities of daily living. Activities can be modified to meet the needs and capabilities of the individual participating. Niagara Catholic school session dates began in late October and continue through to the end of this month.
- Gifted Module
On November 18th students participating in the elementary gifted module will partake in an outdoor learning experience at the Stevensville Conservation area designed to challenge their minds and build essential life skills. Students will strengthen character, communication, and interpersonal skills while working together as a team to overcome challenges. During the orienteering portion of the day, they will work on applying problem-solving, math, and geography skills to navigate and complete a map challenge. Finally, in the ecosystem design workshop, students will explore the diverse habitats of the Niagara Region, use natural materials to create and model their own ecosystems.

- **ABA for Educators Level 1 Training**
Niagara Catholic has been provided with an opportunity to offer educators the chance to complete the ABA for Educators Level 1 online course, provided through the Geneva Centre for Autism. A memo was sent out to the system extending this invitation to Teachers and Educational Assistants to support the ongoing development of skills and capacity building in our schools, to support the growing needs of our students.
- **Upcoming November 28th PD Day**
Elementary and Secondary Educational Assistants and Intervenors will have the opportunity to attend a virtual presentation from our Educational Audiologist who will provide education and practical strategies for educators working with students with Auditory processing needs. Additionally, there will be time dedicated for staff to explore the Niagara Catholic Virtual Learning (NCVLE) for specific resources provided by our central staff. Lastly, Secondary Principals will guide their staff through a presentation developed by Student Support. This presentation follows the same theme of the one led by Elementary Principals on the previous PA Day and focuses on a framework for supporting students in reaching their full potential as they progress through their educational journey. It will also emphasize collaboration within Niagara Catholic's problem-solving model and its application to all students' pathways.

5. Superintendent Pizzoferrato – Gino Pizzoferrato

Superintendent Pizzoferrato reported:

- The Director received a letter of acknowledgment from the Ministry of Education's Special Education Branch. This letter notified the school board that their application for project funding has been approved for \$70,000. The approved project is titled "We Can All Play Adapted Sports Leadership Program and Educator Inclusion and Accessibility Training."
- The funding will provide a significant opportunity to continue expanding popular and well-received accessibility initiatives across both school panels.
- The initiative acknowledges the previous work of Kayla Fuller in promoting accessibility learning and training.
- The new project will involve:
 - Youth Accessibility Ambassadors identified in all elementary schools.
 - Staff representatives who supervise the work of those ambassador teams.

I. TRUSTEE REPORTS - Trustee Burkholder/Trustee Marino

Trustee Burkholder reported:

- Niagara Catholic is currently reviewing and vetting policies pertaining to suspensions and expulsions.

- Input on these policies is encouraged. These policies affect all students and their families.
- A motion was put forth by Trustee Burkholder to add policy review back on the SEAC agenda
Moved by: Trustee Burkholder
Seconded by: Chair Somma
THAT policy review be added to the SEAC agenda.
CARRIED

J. NIAGARA CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

1. The first meeting of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee took place on September 4, 2025. Fr. Paul MacNeil presided over the commissioning ceremony of the newly formed Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee as they publicly proclaimed their commitment to promote the Mission of Catholic education and the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

The next meeting of the NCPIC will take place on Thursday, November 6, 2025.

2. The Ministry of Education has provided funds to all Parent Involvement Committees to support parent engagement. The Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee received \$8,886.00 and each elementary and secondary school received \$500.00 for the 2025-2026 school year.

In addition, the Ministry of Education has also provided funds to school boards through the Core Education Funding and Niagara Catholic has received \$30,000. Catholic School Councils may apply for additional funds up to \$1000 to support parent engagement activities.

3. The Ministry of Education requires Catholic School Councils and the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee to annually submit a written report that includes meeting dates, activities, and a financial statement for the school year. The 2024-2025 Catholic School Councils and NCPIC Annual Report was presented for information at the October 14, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting.
4. School Mental Health Ontario (SMH-ON) Parent Resources:
[SMH-ON resources for parents/caregivers are posted on the Board website under the Mental Health and Well-Being tile.](#)
New resource release: [Supporting your child through back-to-school stress and anxiety](#)
5. The Ministry of Education hosted a virtual meeting for all Parent Involvement Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs and School Board Leads on October 21, 2025 at 7:00p.m. Matthew Johnson, Director of Education for Media Smarts, Canada's Centre for Digital Media Literacy was the guest speaker. Matthew spoke about Media Literacy Week: October 27-31 which is an annual event promoting digital media literacy across Canada. Media Smarts offers a variety of resources

and information for parents. Resources are available at <https://mediasmarts.ca/resources-for-parents>.

Government updates also included:

- [Level Up](#)
- [Curriculum Resources for Parents](#)
- [Cyber Awareness Month](#)
- [Menstrual Equity Initiative](#)

K. NEW BUSINESS/AGENDA ITEMS

No new business.

L. NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, December 3, 2025 at 6:30 p.m., at The Catholic Education Centre.

M. CLOSING PRAYER/MOMENT OF SILENCE: Chair Somma led the moment of silence.

N. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Trustee Burkholder

Seconded by: Jessica Thomas

THAT the November 5, 2025 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee be adjourned.

CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
DECEMBER 16, 2025**

PUBLIC SESSION

**TITLE: TRUSTEE EXPENSES AND REIMBURSEMENT FOR THE
FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025**

The Trustee expenses and reimbursement for the fiscal year 2024-2025 report
is presented for information.

Prepared by: Giancarlo Vetrone, Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services

Presented by: Giancarlo Vetrone, Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services

Approved by: Camillo Cipriano, Director of Education/Secretary-Treasurer

Date: December 16, 2025



REPORT TO THE BOARD DECEMBER 16, 2025

TRUSTEE EXPENSES AND REIMBURSEMENT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As elected officials, school trustees serve as guardians of the public trust. Establishing a distinct trustee expense policy promotes financial integrity, accountability, and transparency, thereby strengthening public confidence in Ontario's public education system.

Individual trustees are responsible for submitting specific expenses that are related to their role and responsibilities as Catholic trustees. All expenses claimed must be directly associated with the duties of a board member and comply with the Education Act, applicable regulations, and board policy.

Under the Education Act, boards may establish policies to reimburse trustees for all or part of the out-of-pocket expenses reasonably incurred while carrying out their responsibilities as board members.

In accordance with Niagara Catholic's Board Policy #100.13, trustee expenses and reimbursements must be posted annually on the board's website and reported publicly to the board before December 31 of the current year.

Expenses are reported under the following categories:

- a. Office equipment
- b. Office supplies
- c. Conference and workshops
- d. Travel for board-sanctioned business
- e. Miscellaneous – other costs

As required by the Education Act, the Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive, and board policy, all expense reports for each trustee will remain on the board's website for one year after the expiry of their term of office.

Attached to this report is Appendix A, which provides the trustee expenses for the previous fiscal year (2024–2025).

The Trustee expenses and reimbursement for the fiscal year 2024-2025 report is presented for information.

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NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
TRUSTEE EXPENDITURES & REIMBURSEMENT SUMMARY
SEPTEMBER 1, 2024 - AUGUST 31, 2025

2024 - 2025 Trustee Expenditures & Reimbursement								
Trustee Name			Office Equipment/S upplies	Cell Phone	Conference & Workshop	Mileage Claims	Internet	Total Expenses
Doug Joyner	Trustee	1010	-	450.00	3,984.55	-	540.00	4,974.55
Natalia Benoit	Trustee	1011	-	450.00	-	-	540.00	990.00
Larry Huibers	Trustee	1012	-	450.00	1,220.85	30.64	540.00	2,241.49
Paul Turner	Trustee	1013	-	450.00	3,223.06	30.65	540.00	4,243.71
Danny DiLorenzo	Chair of the Board	1014	-	450.00	6,547.21	1,457.50	540.00	8,994.71
Joe Bruzzese	Trustee	1015	-	450.00	-	-	540.00	990.00
Jim Marino	Trustee	1016	-	450.00	-	-	540.00	990.00
Rhianon Burkholder	Vice-Chair of the Board	1017	-	450.00	5,562.46	581.93	540.00	7,134.39
Central Purchases				-	-	-	-	-
Total - Trustees			-	3,600.00	20,538.13	2,100.72	4,320.00	30,558.85

2024 - 2025 Student Trustee Expenditures & Reimbursement								
	Name		Office Equipment/S upplies	Cell Phone	Conference Workshop	Mileage Claims	Internet	Total
Student Trustee (A)	Taylor Sexton	1020	-	-	3,765.61	-	-	3,765.61
Student Trustee (B)	Emilio Geremia	1021	-	-	4,576.04	-	-	4,576.04
Central Purchases								-
Total - Student Trustees			-	-	8,341.65	-	-	8,341.65