

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 27, 2026**

PUBLIC SESSION

**TOPIC: UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE MEETING OF JANUARY 13, 2026**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board receive the unapproved Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of January 13, 2026, as presented.



MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2026

Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee of the Whole of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, held on Tuesday, January 13, 2026 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 Benoit

2. Roll Call

Vice-Chair Burkholder noted that Trustee Huibers was asked to be excused and Trustee Di Lorenzo joined electronically.

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**, **Domenic Massi**, **Joseph Zaroda**, Superintendents of Education; **Giancarlo Vetrone**, Associate Director of Education - Corporate Service; **Anna Lisa Conidi**, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant, Corporate Services

3. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Trustee Paul Turner

THAT the Committee of the Whole approve the Agenda of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of January 13, 2026, as presented.

CARRIED

4. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Declaration of Conflict of Interest was declared by Trustees Di Lorenzo and Benoit with Item G2 of the In Camera Agenda. These trustees have family members who are teachers, or employees of the Board. They left the meeting during discussion of this item.

5. Approval of Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of December 9, 2025

Moved by Trustee Jim Marino

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

CARRIED

6. Consent Agenda Items

6.1 Staff Development Department Professional Development Opportunities

Presented for information.

6.2 Holy Childhood Association Fundraiser

Presented for information.

6.3 In Camera Items G1

Moved by Trustee Doug Joyner

THAT the Committee of the Whole adopt consent agenda items.

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATIONS

C. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

1. Revised Estimates for the Year 2025-2026

Giancarlo Vetrone, Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services presented the Revised Estimates for the Year 2025-2026 report for information.

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

2. Niagara Catholic Graduation Rates for the 2019-2020 and the 2020-2021 Grade 9 Cohorts as of August 31, 2024

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells, presented the Niagara Catholic Graduation Rates for the 2019-2020 and the 2020-2021 Grade 9 cohorts as of August 31, 2024 report for information.

3. **Monthly Updates**

3.1 **Student Trustees' Update**

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

3.2 **Senior Staff Good News Update**

Senior Staff highlights included:

Superintendent Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells,

- St. Michael Catholic Elementary School will welcome a Program Development and Outreach Officer from the Legislative Assembly of Ontario on January 20, 2026 to deliver a free, 90-minute Grade 5 government program. Students will learn about Parliament, governance, and civic engagement through an interactive presentation and a mock debate with costumes. Local MPP Wayne Gates will stop by to greet students. This visit offers a valuable hands-on learning experience that connects curriculum to real-world civic processes.
- Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Catholic Elementary School is pleased to be hosting international students from Korea from January 10th to the 24th, 2026. In February, students and staff will be welcoming international students from Peru. In partnership with Heart Niagara grade 7 students will be receiving CPR training. Open House for Kindergarten is scheduled for February 5th, 2026.

Director Cipriano,

- Our school communities experienced an extraordinary outpouring of generosity this Christmas season, bringing hope and relief to many families. Thanks to the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education and the heartfelt efforts of Margaret Moody, 212 grocery gift cards valued at \$100 each from the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education, 26 gift card valued at \$50 each and 2 gift cards valued at \$60 each from Ms. Moody were distributed to families in need. Ms. Moody and her family also prepared 30 gift bags filled with winter essentials, toys, personal care items, McDonalds and Dollarama gift cards, funded in part by \$1,200 she collected and an additional \$2,400 raised through a church initiative. Their compassion ensured that dozens of families felt supported and cared for during the holidays. We extend our deepest gratitude to the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education, Ms. Moody, and her family for making such a meaningful difference in our school community.

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)

- No amendment

The Committee of the Whole requested that the Accessibility Customer Service Policy (800.8.1), be vetted from January 14, 2026 to February 19, 2026 with a recommended deadline

for presentation to the Committee of the Whole in March 2026 for consideration to the Board in March 2026.

1.2. Supporting Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions Policy (302.1)

Superintendent Pizzoferrato, presented the Supporting Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions Policy (302.1)

- No amendment

The Committee of the Whole requested that the Supporting Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions Policy (302.1), be vetted from January 14, 2026 to February 19, 2026 with a recommended deadline for presentation to the Committee of the Whole in March 2026 for consideration to the Board in March 2026.

2. Governance Policy Review Schedule

Director Cipriano presented the Governance Policy Review Schedule.

E. INFORMATION

1. Trustee Information

1.1 Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA) – 2026 AGM Resolution Information Package

Vice Chair Burkholder presented 2026 AGM Resolution Information Package.

1.2 Board Draft Committee Membership

Vice Chair Burkholder presented the Board Draft Committee Membership Form.

One amendment was made Trustee Bruzzese will replace Trustee Burkholder on the Audit Committee. Board Committee Membership will start next month February 2026.

1.3 Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA) – Annual General Membership & Conference – April 30 – May 2, 2026 Windsor

Vice Chair Burkholder presented OCSTA Annual General Membership Conference.

Trustees were asked to confirm their attendance with Anna Lisa Conidi.

F. OTHER BUSINESS

1. General Discussion to Plan for Future Action

G. BUSINESS IN CAMERA

Addressed within consent agenda section.

Moved by Trustee Joyner

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 7:20 p.m. and reconvened at 7:41 p.m.

H. REPORT ON THE IN-CAMERA SESSION

SECTION B: STUDENT TRUSTEES EXCLUDED

Moved by Trustee Joyner

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 December 9, 2026, as presented.

CARRIED (Item G1)

Discussion on negotiations took place.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Bruzesse

THAT the January 13, 2026 Committee of the Whole Meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Niagara Catholic District School Board held on **January 13, 2026**.

Approved on **February 10, 2026**.

Rhianon Burkholder
Vice-Chair of the Board

Camillo Cipriano
Director of Education/Secretary -Treasurer

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 27, 2026**

PUBLIC SESSION

**TOPIC: APPROVED MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC) MEETING OF
DECEMBER 3, 2025**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board receive the Approved Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of **December 3, 2025, as presented for information.**



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

December 3, 2025

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, held on Wednesday, December 3, 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

Jim Di Gioia 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 (Kylee Daley)	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			

The following staff were in attendance:

Gino Pizzoferrato, Superintendent of Education, Roxanne Rees, Nicole Royer, Grace Brochu, Lisa Clark, Susy Walsh, Ann Marie Criddle, Danny Giancola, Jim Di Gioia

4. **Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by: Alyson Wilson

Seconded by: Trustee Burkholder

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of December 3, 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 November 5, 2025**

Moved by: Trustee Burkholder

Seconded by: Trustee Marino

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

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATIONS – *Gino Pizzoferrato, Superintendent of Education*

Superintendent Pizzoferrato presented:

SEAC Responsibilities and Goals Update:

- A pre-meeting information session held with SEAC members with the goal to gather input and feedback from community partners on the committee's long-standing goals.

1. SEAC Core Responsibilities

- Ensuring the rights of students with special needs are met through ongoing dialogue and continuous improvement of services.
- Providing information, assistance, and advice to parents/guardians whose children require additional support. (A Niagara Catholic-specific presentation on this is being considered.)
- Making recommendations to the Board regarding the development of special education programs and services, using the Special Education Guide for Parents as a core document.
- Participating in the board's annual budget process related to special education, which includes a formal, transparent presentation typically held in the spring.

- Conducting an annual review of the Special Education Plan, which is posted on the board's website and guided by a coordinator and ministry reporting requirements.

2. Goal Focus: Improving Transitions

- To improve transitions for all students. This includes transitions:
 - Into school for the first time.
 - From elementary to secondary.
 - From secondary to post-secondary and beyond.
- Several significant strategies (projects) have been undertaken to address this goal:
 - Secondary schools were given funds to host transition events. These events invited not just Grade 8 students, but often intermediate-grade children, to help them anticipate the move to secondary school. Transition activities were also encouraged for students leaving the secondary system (e.g., for employment or community work).
 - A symposium was held for all elementary and secondary Educational Resource Teachers. The focus was on transitions across all stages (JK through post-secondary), emphasizing different student pathways. Community partners were invited to discuss programs available to students and families.
 - The Student Support department made staff available in the last weeks of August to assist children entering the system or transitioning between cohorts. This team helped schools, parents, and students prepare for upcoming transitions.
 - Targeted PD was delivered to elementary and secondary principals regarding the pathways and transitions available to students (mirroring information previously presented at a SEAC meeting).

The floor was opened for feedback from community partners regarding outstanding concerns related to transitions, emphasizing the importance of early connections between elementary feeder schools and secondary schools to facilitate early planning for families. The committee is also open to revisiting the core goals or establishing new ones if necessary.

C. POLICY REVIEW – *Superintendent Pizzoferrato*

- Policy Review: Expulsion and Exclusion
 - Two policies have been circulated to the committee for review: the Expulsion Policy and the Exclusion from School or Class Policy.
 - The documents presented to the SEAC were in the public vetting stage.
- The policies had already gone through the Committee of the Whole for discussion, and recommended changes (shown in red, with deletions crossed out in black) were made after much consideration by staff and the Board of Trustees.
- The SEAC was asked to apply a "Special Education lens" to the policies, a request initiated by Trustee Burkholder.
- SEAC members and staff were encouraged to provide ongoing feedback

A discussion with the SEAC members took place regarding both the Expulsion Policy and the Exclusion from School or Class Policy on what could potentially be missing from the policies.

- Trustee Burkholder emphasized the importance of receiving feedback from SEAC, NCPIC, and staff, calling it the "most valuable feedback" for policy formation.
- The feedback loop will remain open for both policies, with a deadline to be established soon to ensure the input is included in the regular review cycle.
- The process validates the importance of reviewing these policies at the SEAC table to ensure the special education lens is properly applied.

D. CHAIR'S REPORT-*Chair Somma*

Chair Somma reported:

International Day of Persons with Disabilities, November 5, 2025:

- Theme for 2025: "Fostering disability inclusive societies for advancing social progress across all regions."
- Persons with disabilities and their households face significant barriers to social development, including:
 - Higher likelihood of poverty.
 - Discrimination in employment, resulting in lower wages and overrepresentation in the informal sector.
 - Inadequate and uneven social protection systems that often don't account for extra disability-related costs.
 - Lack of dignity, autonomy, and agency in care and support systems.
- The three interrelated and mutually reinforcing themes are poverty eradication, promotion of full and productive employment/decent work for all, and social integration.
- The inclusion of persons with disabilities as both agents and beneficiaries is indispensable for achieving social development goals across all aspects of life (social, economic, cultural, and political).
- Education's role is to support students with disabilities to help shape a society where they are less likely to experience poverty and discrimination and more likely to attain gainful employment.

E. AGENCY REPORTS

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

No report.

2. Niagara Children's Centre – *Kylee Daley*

Kylee Daley reported:

- January Transitions: They are currently working on the transition to school for children who participated in the fall program and will be entering school in the second term (January).
- Next Year's Transitions: They are also starting the transition process for all children born in 2022 who will be entering Junior Kindergarten next year.

3. Pathstone Mental Health – *Michelle Toy*

No report.

4. Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet) – *DJ Holmes*

DJ Holmes reported:

- They successfully completed their final fundraiser of the year for their children's programs.
- Plans for building an accessible playground on the property were recently launched on their website. Information and donation details can be found at clpcw.com.
- Staff had a positive experience attending Lakeshore Catholic High School's Grade 8 Open House, which served as a valuable networking opportunity.
- The organization has several holiday events planned:
 - An entry in the Port Colborne Santa Claus Parade this weekend.
 - Their annual kids' Christmas party in two weeks.
 - Their third annual Christmas dinner dance for all individuals they support.

5. Inclusion West Niagara – *Patricia Ferrie*

Patricia Ferrie reported:

- The organization has officially changed its name and is now Inclusion West Niagara (no longer Community Living Grimsby). Email addresses have been changed, and the website is being updated.
- They successfully held their first overnight respite session.
- They will not be able to offer overnight respite in December due to staffing issues but are planning one for January 10th.
- They continue to offer Saturday and Sunday respite from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
- The organization is participating in its first-ever Santa Claus Parade in Grimsby this Saturday.
 - The children's program is involved.
 - The parade theme is "Canada," so they will be carrying decorated hockey and lacrosse sticks to represent Canadian sports.

6. Down Syndrome Niagara - *Andrea Pede*

Andrea Pede reported:

- Upcoming events:
 - Dance Your Niagara Christmas Party: This Sunday, December 7th, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Americana Conference Resort.
 - Annual General Meeting (AGM): Monday, January 19th, from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM, currently planned for Williams Fresh Cafe (location may change based on attendance)
- World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD) 2026 Theme:
 - World Down Syndrome Day is March 21st.
 - The global theme for 2026 is a call to "stand together against loneliness."
 - People with Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities, along with their families, often experience loneliness more intensely and frequently.
 - Loneliness is not a choice; it results when people are not supported in building real connections. It is exacerbated by stigma, discrimination, and exclusion from school, work, and community life. Being physically present is not the same as being included.
- Key Facts:
 - 39% of people with intellectual disabilities often feel lonely, compared to 14% of people without disabilities.
 - Loneliness is reportedly as detrimental to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. To combat loneliness, it is essential to promote and remind everyone that every person needs real inclusion, welcoming spaces, and meaningful relationships beyond immediate family and supporters. This is treated as a human rights issue.
 - The theme also helps counteract the common, incorrect stereotype that a person with Down syndrome is "always happy," addressing the reality of emotional well-being and loneliness, especially heightened since the pandemic.

7. Mainstream - *Erica Simmanivong-Elizarraras*

No report.

8. Bethesda Services – *Alyson Wilson*

Alyson Wilson reported:

- Christmas Break Service Guide: This guide details various recreational and family activities offered by Bethesda throughout the holidays. Families are encouraged to check the website for information if they are looking for things to do during the break.

- Winter Service Guide (January to March): This guide covers free and immediately available services for families, including:
 - Recreational and clinical groups (Monday to Thursday evenings and Saturdays).
 - Interdisciplinary consultations.
 - Support groups for caregivers (including a male group).
 - A Sibling Resilience Group, run in partnership with the Powerhouse Young Caregivers Association.
- FASD and Mental Health Collaboration:
 - Bethesda is co-facilitating a series of workshops with **Contact Niagara** on various topics related to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and mental health
- Niagara College Dental Clinic:
 - Bethesda staff and students from Niagara College's Dental Hygiene and Behavioral Science programs are hosting a clinic to support families in receiving dental hygiene checkups.
- Third Annual Caregiver Appreciation Dinner, taking place next Wednesday.
 - The dinner is generously donated by Amici's Banquet Hall, with meals provided by the Niagara College Culinary Program.
 - The Bethesda team provides childcare so that families can enjoy a night out. Over 150 families are registered to attend.

9. Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Jessica Thomas

Jessica Thomas reported:

- Autism Ontario recently released a public statement in response to the province's media release on November 13th. This statement is available on their website.
- Resources for parents and families navigating a new diagnosis are always available.
 - A "Navigating a New Diagnosis" information session will be held online on December 10th from 12:00 PM to 1:30 PM.
- The Ontario Autism Program (OAP) provider list is available on the website to ensure families access approved providers for funding.
- A four-part video series is available to assist individuals transitioning into adulthood after high school with their Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) application.
- Available webinars include topics like "Autistic Burnout" and "Supporting Emotional Regulation."
- School Collection Resources: This resource collection is continually available for families and includes guides for parents on:
 - The Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) process.
 - Preparing their child for a special education meeting (includes a video and resource guide).
- Special Education Workshops:
 - A workshop titled "Understanding Special Education" is scheduled for December 9th.

- An on-demand webinar, "The Journey Through Special Education: Navigating Challenges and Building Connection," is accessible at any time.
- The website is the central place to register for all family events and parent-focused activities, including:
 - The monthly "RAD Dads" meeting.
 - The monthly "Moms Meeting Minutes"

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

Monique Somma reported:

- A successful annual fundraising dinner dance was held, which included a silent auction.
- A Christmas tea was hosted for all families and staff.
- Staff conducted ongoing training on Social Role Valorization (SRV), a philosophy previously presented to the SEAC group.
- The organization now has three certified SRV trainers on-site, enabling continued internal training for staff.
- Families and all board members are also invited to and receive training on this core organizational philosophy.

F. COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE REPORT - *Krystine Donato*

No report.

G. INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATIVE REPORT - *Cindi Lee Ecker-Flagg*

No report.

H. SECONDARY STUDENT SENATE REPRESENTATIVE REPORT- *Lucas Bishop*

Lucas Bishop reported:

- November was a busy month across the high schools, filled with events that promoted school spirit, remembrance, inclusion, and mental health awareness.
- Many schools started the month with Color Wars, friendly competitions between grades to boost school spirit.
- Remembrance Day services were held across schools to honor and remember past sacrifices.
- Elementary students and student senators from both elementary and secondary schools attended the Lead Out Loud conference.
 - Harmony Movement delivered the keynote address. The presentation focused on student leadership, the importance of inclusion, inclusive language, and accepting people regardless of race, culture, or beliefs, aligning with the board's main theme of "Solidarity."

- Project Plaid: Celebrated on November 27th, students were invited to:
 - Dress in plaid.
 - Raise funds for Pathstones Mental Health.
 - Schools held mental health awareness activities to reflect on the importance of mental health and supporting those who are struggling.
- As schools approach Christmas, the focus is on Advent and community giving, with schools collecting various goods to help the less fortunate.

I. STAFF REPORTS

1. Elementary Principal – *Susy Walsh*

No report.

2. Secondary Principal – *Nicole Royer and Roxanne Rees*

Nicole Royer and Roxanne Rees reported:

Recent and upcoming events:

- Denis Morris:
 - DM participated in Special Olympics basketball with a winning record of 3-0.
 - We have started a weekly library group. Our librarian has an activity and our students choose a book to sign out. She also will read a story.
 - We are planning to attend a Special Education movie event with Notre Dame, Lakeshore, St. Francis, Holy Cross and BT (6 schools).
 - We will be having one para swimmer from Denis Morris attend Zone Swimming this week
- Blessed Trinity
 - December 9 - Attending a viewing of 'Zootopia 2' at Seaway Mall
 - Our class will be taking an active role in the BT Christmas Food Drive - Box distribution and collection
 - Our CO-OP students are continuing to develop independence at their placements
 - We are looking forward to the birth of Christ, by engaging in numerous class activities
 - We support the school's breakfast program daily in a variety of roles
- Holy Cross
 - Students participated in the Special Olympics Ontario basketball tournament at Thorold Secondary school
 - Full-time placement students attended SNAP at Brock and had a great time
 - Students attend school Chapel every Monday morning and have a short service where the students participate in an opening song. Some of the partially integrated students read the opening prayer, the Sunday Gospel, intersessions and a closing prayer. We review what year we are in for the church (A, B or C) and talk about the colours associated with whatever Sunday we are in and discuss that the new church year begins with the 1st Sunday of Advent, currently year A.

- Activity for this week was making paper advent wreaths
- Class reviewed what it means when the candle in the Chapel is lit and what to do during mass at communion time
- Two partially integrated students read intercessions at the full school mass and the students brought up the gifts
- Saint Francis
 - Show and Share (Greta's & Charlie's)
 - Music Therapy
 - Project Plaid activities
 - Joining in the school-wide lip dub video
 - Welcoming Elf on the Shelf & celebrating birthdays
 - Open House December 4th, 6:00 p.m.
- Saint Michael
 - Christmas Basket Drive for families in need
 - Christmas Party with STP December 17th - Mendelt performing live
 - Baking Christmas Cookies
- Saint Paul
 - Baking Christmas Cookies this Friday
 - Polar Express Programming next Friday
 - Christmas Party at STM Dec. 17 singing carols, crafts and cookies
 - Full Christmas dinner Dec. 18
- Notre Dame
 - Tailgates Pizza Making Dec. 3
 - Swim Team Zone Dec. 4
 - Movie Day Dec. 9
 - Mad Science Dec 12 and 18
 - Mendelt Dec. 19
 - Christmas Dinner Dec. 19
- Lakeshore Catholic
 - Baking Christmas Cookies
 - Christmas Dinner last week before break
 - Christmas Crafts and Caroling
 - Movie Day Dec. 9

3. Student Support – *Ann Marie Criddle*

Ann Marie reported:

- ERT and Special Education Classroom Teacher meeting
 - On Tuesday, December 2, our annual Behaviour Management Systems refresher certification was held for elementary and secondary ERTs and Program Chairs. This session took place in the morning. Those who require full certification will have the opportunity to attend training early in the new year. In the afternoon, ERTs had the opportunity to participate virtually in a Lexia PowerUp or Core5 session. The Core5 sessions were differentiated to meet the needs of staff at various stages of implementation—whether new to Lexia, developing their practice, or progressing toward becoming data experts in the program.

- Kindergarten Transition to School
 - Transition to School Parent Information Sessions, hosted at the Niagara Children's Centre in collaboration with regional partners, have begun. These sessions provide parents with an opportunity to learn more about Niagara Catholic Kindergarten classrooms and the transition to school process.
 - The first session was held on the evening of Wednesday, November 26th, and the second took place this morning, December 3rd. Both of these sessions were offered in person. The final session has been scheduled for Wednesday, January 14th at 4:00 p.m. and will be offered virtually.
- Secondary Open Houses
 - Niagara Catholic Secondary Schools have started hosting their Open Houses. Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School, Lakeshore Catholic High School, Saint Paul Catholic High School, and Denis Morris Catholic High School all held theirs on November 20th. In December, Blessed Trinity Catholic High School and Saint Francis Catholic Secondary School will host their events on Thursday, December 4th. Looking ahead to January, Saint Paul Catholic High School will hold its open house on January 13th, followed by Notre Dame College School on January 14th.

4. Superintendent Pizzoferrato – *Gino Pizzoferrato*

No report.

J. TRUSTEE REPORTS - *Trustee Burkholder/Trustee Marino*

Trustee Marino reported:

- Trustees have been busy attending various functions, including the open houses mentioned previously, and upcoming special masses, nativity performances, and musical offerings.
- Trustees and senior administrative staff held their annual Faith Advent evening, where chaplaincy staff focused on preparation and readiness for the birth of Christ, drawing a parallel to food preparation. They posed reflective questions, including:
 - How would you describe the "site" of your faith today (small bowl, medium bowl, or heaping plate)?
 - How is God calling you to feed others (with kindness, hope, or encouragement)?
 - Who do you share your faith with?
 - How did God accompany you through a difficult moment?
- At the recent organizational meeting, Danny Di Lorenzo was re-elected as Chair and Rhianon Burkholder was re-elected as Vice-Chair, both by acclamation.

K. NIAGARA CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

No report.

L. NEW BUSINESS/AGENDA ITEMS

- February meeting: presentation on selective mutism.

M. NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, January 7, 2025 at 6:30 p.m., at The Catholic Education Centre.

N. CLOSING PRAYER/MOMENT OF SILENCE: Chair Somma led the closing prayer.

O. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Trustee Burkholder

Seconded by: Jessica Thomas

THAT the December 3, 2025 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee be adjourned.

CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 27, 2026**

PUBLIC SESSION

**TOPIC: APPROVED MINUTES OF THE NIAGARA CATHOLIC
PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE (NCPIC) MEETING
OF NOVEMBER 6, 2025**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board receive the Approved Minutes of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of November 6, 2025, as presented for information.



**MINUTES OF THE
NIAGARA CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
NOVEMBER 6, 2025**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee, held on Thursday, November 6, 2025 at 6:30 p.m., in the Father Kenneth Burns csc Board Room, at the Catholic Education Centre, 427 Rice Road, Welland, ON.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that in the absence of Chair Thomas that she would be presiding over the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee meeting and reminded all those in attendance that the meetings of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee are livestreamed, recorded, and posted on the Board website.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. *Opening Prayer*

Fr. Paul MacNeil led the Land Acknowledgement and the Opening Prayer.

2. *Roll Call:*

Parent Members	Present In-person	Present Electronically	Excused	Absent
Brenda Annen	✓			
Julie Bateman		✓		
Rose Heron	✓			
Sara Ivicic	✓			
Michael McKnight	✓			
Laura Thomas			✓	
Carrie Vernelli	✓			
Bishop/Diocesan Representative				
Fr. Paul MacNeil		✓		
Ontario Association for Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE)				
Jennifer Pilzecker			✓	
Secondary Student Senate Representative				
Ella Colaneri			✓	
Trustees				
Joe Bruzzese				✓
Larry Huibers	✓			

The following staff attended:

Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells, Superintendent of Education, **Maria Solomon**, Elementary Principal, **Chris McLean**, Secondary Vice-Principal, and **Yvonne Anderson**, Recording Secretary /Administrative Assistant.

Regrets Received: Ella Colaneri and Laura Thomas.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: Brenda Annen

THAT the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee approve the agenda of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of November 6, 2025 as presented.

CARRIED

4. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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

5. Approval of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting Minutes of September 4, 2025

Moved by: Michael McKnight

THAT the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee approve the minutes of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of September 4, 2025 as presented.

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATION

1. ShineOn Method: “Digital Parenting” by Lucy Colangelo (30 min., plus Q&A)
Superintendent Forsyth-Sells welcomed Lucy Colangelo to the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting and provided a brief bio before Lucy made a presentation on the various workshops available to parents/guardians to support their children.

Highlights from the presentation included the following workshops available to parents/guardians:

- Digital Parenting: Close That Problem Awareness Gap
- Total Digital Reset: Reset Relationship with Tech at Home and School
- Clarity Mapping Programs: Shine A Light on the Path to a Bright Future

A question-and-answer session followed. For further details visit the [ShineON Method](#) website.

C. POLICY

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that the Student Expulsion Policy (302.6.5) is currently being vetted.

1. Feedback to be submitted on behalf of the NCPIC is to be sent to Yvonne Anderson no later than 12:00p.m. on Monday, January 5, 2026.
2. Feedback being submitted as an individual is to be sent directly to Anna Lisa Conidi no later than 12:00p.m. on Tuesday, January 6, 2026.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells thanked Michael McKnight for providing feedback on behalf of the NCPIC for the Board By-Laws Policy (100.1) and the Trustee Electronic Meetings (Board and Committees) Policy (100.8). NCPIC members were reminded that a statement of “no comment” is recorded as feedback, and is provided to the Trustees for information.

D. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR’S DESIGNATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

1. 2024-2025 Catholic School Councils and NCPIC Annual Report

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that 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.

2. *The Vineyard*-October Issue 2025

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells shared that the link to the October issue of *The Vineyard* was included in the agenda and encouraged NCPIC members to read *The Vineyard* as there are several articles that highlight Niagara Catholic including:

- Bishop Bergie's address to Niagara Catholic educators and staff on the PA Day of September 19, 2025
- 50th Anniversary of Catholic High School Pilgrimages
- The St. Carlos Acutis Challenge-For student in grades 5-12
- Updates from the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education
- "Light the Way" the Bishop's Fundraising Gala -Tickets are available through the QR code.

3. Special Meeting with the Ministry of Education for PICs and School Board Leads

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that 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 7:00 p.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>.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells also reported on the Government Updates and shared that the links to the topics were included in the agenda for information.

○ Level Up

Level Up is an Ontario-wide multi-day career fair connecting students with the best skilled trades professionals. This year Level Up for the Niagara region took place today, November 6, 2025, in Hamilton, at the Ancaster Fairgrounds. Select students from each Niagara Catholic secondary school participated in events and had the opportunity to learn about Ontario's 140+ Skill Trades through interactive exhibitions and hands-on activities, while hearing directly from tradespeople and local employers about life-changing career opportunities.

Niagara Catholic elementary and secondary school communities were also informed that Level Up was open from 3:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., to the general public.

○ Curriculum Resources for Parents

The Ontario curriculum outlines the knowledge and skills students need for success in any pathway they choose. Each grade or course builds on the learning in the previous one and progresses alongside students' developmental growth. The Ministry invites parents/guardians to visit the site for new digital versions of the Ontario curriculum in all subjects and grades, and parent guides.

○ Cyber Awareness Month

Every October, the Cyber Awareness Month campaign brings awareness to the importance of staying safe online. Through fun activities, real-life examples, and easy tips, students learn how to protect their info, spot red flags, and make smart choices on the internet. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to visit the site for further information and resources to support student learning at home.

○ Menstrual Equity Initiative

Parents/Guardians were encouraged to click on the agenda link for further details. Niagara Catholic secondary schools are equipped with dispensers for students to access menstrual products.

4. NCPIC Financial Report

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported on the finances of the NCPIC.

E. SECONDARY STUDENT SENATE REPRESENTATIVE REPORT-*Ella Colaneri*

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells provided a report on behalf of Ella:

- Niagara Catholic elementary and secondary schools participated in Pilgrimage Sunday on October 26, 2025. To support the 50th Anniversary of Notre Dame College Pilgrimage, representatives from each secondary school were bussed to Notre Dame College to walk in solidarity showing the community that we have a strong Catholic faith and commitment to social justice initiatives to support those less fortunate.
- Niagara Catholic secondary schools are preparing to host their Open Houses. Grade 8 students from the elementary feeder schools will be invited to step into the future and experience a day of secondary school culture and opportunities that are offered at the secondary level, including curriculum, electives, clubs, sports, drama and the arts.
- Christmas is fast approaching, but as the secondary schools enter the Christmas season, we recognize that we must place emphasis on our Catholic faith and our Lord, who is the reason for the season. Secondary schools are beginning to plan their fundraisers, dances, assemblies, roadshows, and more. These are just a few initiatives to help give back to the community and support those who are in need during the holidays.
- The City of Niagara Falls will kick off the Santa Claus Parade next weekend. Some schools have chosen to showcase their school at this event to boost student and community spirit.
- Lastly, the Niagara Catholic Secondary Student Senate is meticulously planning our annual Lead Out Loud Conference, which is a leadership conference with Catholic elementary school student senate representatives. The event will take place on Wednesday, November 26. A guest speaker will talk about the importance of equity and solidarity. Elementary senate members have an opportunity to connect their fellow senate members. and share creative ideas/initiatives to bring back to their school community.

F. DIOCESAN REPORT-*Fr. Paul MacNeil*

Fr. Paul MacNeil reported:

1. St. Carlo Acutis Challenge (Grades 5-12) “A Saint Like You”

What it is: A diocesan challenge inviting students to use their God-given gifts— tech, art, music, writing, sport—to create something that shares the Catholic faith today, inspired by St. Carlo Acutis, the teen who loved the Eucharist and used technology to evangelize.

How it works: Students or small groups choose an aspect of faith (Eucharist, saints, prayer, mercy...) and a medium (website/app, video, podcast, poem, art/fashion, song/dance, etc.). Weekly work can happen in class, clubs, or at home. Schools select finalists for a diocesan showcase.

Dates: Started October 21, school finalists due to the Board Faith Formation Office by Friday, April 17, 2026 (4:00 p.m.). Diocesan Showcase & Awards: Saturday, May 2, 2026 at Denis Morris Catholic High School (public welcome)

Finalists:

- Elementary: select ONE finalist • Secondary: select TWO finalists • Prizes:
- Secondary: 1st \$1000 • 2nd \$500 • 3rd \$250 • People’s Choice \$500
- Elementary: 1st \$500 • 2nd \$250 • 3rd \$100 • People’s Choice \$250

How parents can help: Encourage your child to participate;
Schools can feature the challenge in the weekly/monthly newsletters.
Teacher/chaplain champions can register students here: bit.ly/acutis-register.
See overview and classroom supports here: bit.ly/Saint-Challenge

Help from the Diocese: If your school runs a “Faith Fair,” Diocesan reps will try to attend: email evangelization@saintcd.com

Logistics contact: Faith Formation Office (James Carnegie / Amanda Wagg-Boyer)

2. Bishop’s Fundraising Gala (supports evangelization + youth/young adults)

This is the first Bishop’s Gala to support evangelization efforts across the Diocese, including youth and your adult ministry that directly serve families in Niagara Catholic schools. The gala will take place on Friday, November 28, 2025 from 5:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at John Michael’s Banquet Hall (1368 Uppers Ln., Thorold). Tickets are \$250.00 (with an eligible tax-receipt for \$125.00). There are only 8 tickets remaining. Tickets are available at www.bishopsgala.ca. Please join us for a joyful night of faith, fellowship and support for ministries that surround and strengthen our school communities.

G. ONTARIO ASSOCIATION FOR PARENTS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION (OAPCE)

Trustee Huibers provided a report on behalf of Jennifer Pilzecker, Niagara Catholic Regional OAPCE Director:

What is OAPCE?

- The Ontario Association for Parents in Catholic Education is the voice of parents/guardians of children enrolled in the publicly funded English Catholic System in the Province of Ontario since 1939.
- OAPCE is the only Catholic parent association recognized by the Ministry of Education. OAPCE provides a voice for parents who share a common goal in supporting the continuation and preservation of publicly funded Catholic education in the province.

How to engage with OAPCE?

- The OAPCE website is: www.oapce.org
This is a great resource for parents/guardians and those interested in advancing Catholic education in the province. There are publications, reports and survey results that may be of interest on the site.

What has OAPCE been busy with?

- OAPCE participated in the Ministry of Education Task Force to implement the revised Provincial Code of Conduct (PPM 128) for the 2024-2025 school year. This initiative aims to refocus education on the basics, improve classroom environments and enhance communication with parents/guardians, students and educators.
- On November 13, OAPCE will host an in-person meeting at Saint Michael Catholic High School at 7:00 p.m., for OAPCE liaison representatives. The evening will commence with a meet and greet, followed by guest speaker Lucy Colangelo, OAPCE Provincial and Regional updates and round table discussions.
- Please visit the OAPCE website to register for this in-person meeting.

H. SEAC REPORT

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells on behalf of SEAC reported on the following:

- ERT and Special Education Classroom Teacher meeting
The November Student Support Learning Session was held yesterday, Wednesday, November 5, at the Catholic Education Centre. The 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)
All 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 18, 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 PA 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 Environment (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.

I. STAFF REPORTS-*Maria Solomon and Chris McLean*

Elementary Principal, Solomon and Secondary Vice-Principal, McLean provided elementary and secondary school updates for information.

Elementary

Principal, Solomon reported:

- Catholic School Council elections took place in September along with the annual Terry Fox Walk/Run, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, which went beyond wearing Orange Shirts.
- Many schools at the elementary level had the Indigenous Team supporting different activities. St. Mary planted six cedar trees planted with a seventh one for the 7 Grandfather Teachings and also tied it into: the 7 Catholic Social Teachings, 7 Catholic Graduate Expectations, 7 Sacraments and the 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit
- In October, High Schools participated in the annual Pilgrimage which Chris will speak to but this ties into the Holy Childhood Association Walk across the Board. St. Mary NF had their first Pilgrimage where students in grades 4 to 8 walked to St. Patrick Church Hall with the support of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and Project Share – where students walk to raise money for the Holy Childhood Foundation and also, We Scare Hunger by making a food donation
- November 3-11, is Treaties Recognition Week committed to reconciliation and learning and relearning to support our Indigenous Brothers and Sisters.
- Progress Reports are available the week of November 10 (parent portal). Kindergarten observations for Year 1 students take place for Term 1 between November 1 to February.
- Niagara Catholic Chaplaincy visits are underway – three visits per school throughout the year support our faith while the literacy and math coaches meet with teachers to support.
- Niagara Catholic St. Carlo Acutis Challenge -- Students are invited to create a project that highlights an aspect of Catholic faith they are passionate about and share it in a way that is engaging and effective. Projects can take many forms, including: Website, App, Video or Game, Podcast or Social Media Campaign, ... that spreads the love of Jesus and our faith – due in April 2026.
- The Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA) "Pilgrims of Hope: On the Path to Holiness" Short-Video Contest is open until Nov.12/25. Niagara Catholic elementary and secondary schools will have the opportunity to create a two-minute video "As God who called you is holy, be holy yourselves." (1 Peter 1:15-16)
- Preparation for Remembrance Day Service is underway with Poppy Campaigns and connections with an organization called The Memory Project for guest speakers
- Our elementary and secondary principals continue to meet as Professional Learning Teams (PLTs), using data from Knowledgehook, Acadience Screeners and Lexia to support the implementation of the Science of Reading.
- In addition, Catholic School Councils and staff will be meeting to review the results of the EQAO assessments, collaborate and share Student Achievement Plans and provide ways to foster deeper relationships and support student achievement.
- Bullying Awareness & Prevention Week runs November 17-21, 2025
- Gr. 8 Open Houses are scheduled in November – Saint Paul Open House will be on November 20 with planned Grade 8 Day events in December; Saint Paul is on Dec.12
- Elementary and secondary principals continue to work collaboratively to support transitions to high school through school visits and well-planned events.
- November 26, is the Niagara Catholic Lead Out Loud Conference
- Supporting Pathstone Mental Health by wearing Plaid takes place on November 27, 2025 with a PA Day on November 28.
- Looking ahead to Advent and Christmas, we are planning a range of festive events, including Christmas Family Open Houses, trips to Balls Falls and Weekly Advent Services with a school Mass.
- December 22 to January 5, 2026 is our Christmas Break, returning the day before the Feast of the Epiphany.

- Extracurricular activities will continue to thrive in our schools, with upcoming events in sports and robotics. These include Junior Boys/Girls Triple ball, Intermediate Volleyball, and VEX Robotics competitions—offering students opportunities to grow in teamwork, leadership, and technical skills. Bottom of Form

Secondary

Vice-Principal McLean reported:

- Pilgrimage: All secondary schools participated in this year's pilgrimage, with Notre Dame celebrating its 50th anniversary. Representatives from each school joined the walk with Notre Dame, and an impressive 800–900 attendees gathered for Mass. The unified event saw strong participation across all schools.
- OSSLT: The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) is currently underway and will close on December 2. Students have been preparing through practice tests and receiving additional support to ensure success.
- Midterm Reports: Midterm report cards will be distributed during the week of November 17.
- Parent-Teacher Interviews: Scheduled for November 24–27, these meetings provide an opportunity for families to connect with educators and discuss student progress.
- Fall Athletics: The Niagara Catholic Athletic Association's Fall Championships are in full swing. Winning teams will advance to SOSSA (Southern Ontario Secondary Schools Association).
- Holiday Fundraising: Secondary schools are ramping up Christmas fundraising efforts to support students and families in need. Initiatives include collecting non-perishable food items and monetary donations.
- Post-Secondary Applications: University and college application season has begun. Key deadlines are:
 - University: January 15
 - College: February 1
- Young Women in Trades Bootcamp: On December 17, Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School will host a bootcamp in partnership with our community partners aimed at encouraging young women to explore careers in the skilled trades, such as plumbing, electrical and HVAC.

J. TRUSTEE REPORT

Trustee Huibers reported that:

- The next Committee of the Whole meeting will take place on November 11, 2025 and the Organizational Meeting for Board will take place on November 25, 2025. Both meetings will take place at the Catholic Education Centre and livestreamed and the agenda for the meetings will be posted on the Board website on the Monday immediately prior to the Tuesday meeting date.
- The new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board for the upcoming academic year will be chosen at the Organizational meeting. The meeting is open to the public and will be livestreamed.
- There has been a fair amount of information in the media about local representation and the interest of the Ministry to eliminate the role of the trustees. Trustee Huibers stated he was not going to speak to the strength or the non-value of the trustee but wanted to identify that there is a horizontal movement of information, the role of SEAC and the role of the NCPIC creates an opportunity for movement of information in all directions to ensure that the system understands locally, what those pressures are. There have been a number of school boards that have had supervisors assigned and the role of the trustees taken away. It is clear for the Catholic boards because of our ability to self-govern, the trustees have retained 25% of the access to their services, which the Ministry has determined that, that is the amount of the faith-based influence you would have in the system. Trustee Huibers stated that he didn't

know if that was a fair representation of how it is meant, as he believes we do a much more comprehensive integrated piece and he doesn't know how you peel the onion to determine that is the 25% when it is woven through all of our curriculum. Supervisors were assigned to school boards as certain school boards, Toronto Catholic and Toronto Public the largest of them, didn't meet their budgetary requirements. We have to provide a balanced budget. The supervisors coming in now recognize that it is almost impossible to balance the budget based upon the funding envelop that is provided and now recognize that there are gaps in special education, facilities and deliveries. Niagara Catholic is fortunate that we have a balanced budget but it is not without compromise and sacrifice in a variety of areas. So as the conversation happens as to whether this is a good thing or bad thing to have Trustees determined by the broader public, and the Minister knowing that it is integrated and that's a voice that can happen have value. Trustee Huibers stated that he ran for Trustee because it mattered to him to help be that voice and he knows that his seven peers around the table do that, and Niagara Catholic is very fortunate to have two student trustees in a very active role. When we lose that voice and integration of conversation it's not going to be a good thing for Niagara Catholic and it does create a great risk to publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario. Not because any of the Trustees need a job and or something to come to, Trustees do it because they have faith in the system and they want the system to flourish, counting on everyone around the table and staff to ensure that happens. Trustee Huibers shared that his father was a trustee long before he was, and his father's name is on the original plaque at St. Edward as developing the school when there was no Catholic school in the Jordan area. That wasn't without some challenges in some of the outlying communities to develop Catholic schools, and seeing it evolve through the course of time, its a legacy that exists for all of us and it would be a shame to see it compromised in any way or creating an opportunity that it could be further eroded.

K. NEW BUSINESS/AGENDA ITEMS-DISCUSSION FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- Michael McKnight wanted to address the changes made to the French Immersion program for Kindergarten-Year 1 who will not be able to participate in Year 2 and the return to home schools for the year gap.
 - Superintendent Forsyth-Sells will follow-up with Superintendent, Kim Kinney.
- Michael McKnight also wanted to address the population increase in Niagara and the overflow in some Niagara Catholic schools.
 - Superintendent Forsyth-Sells will follow-up with Superintendent, Giancarlo Vetrone.
- Brenda Annen encouraged all parents/guardians, students and community members to attend the Launch Centre Open House at the Seaway Mall on Wednesday, November 19, 2025 and the SHSM program.

L. NEXT MEETING: Thursday, January 8, 2026 at 6:30p.m. at the Catholic Education Centre.

M. CLOSING PRAYER: Fr. Paul MacNeil led the closing prayer.

N. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Carrie Vernelli

THAT the November 6, 2025 meeting of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee be adjourned.

CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
JANAUARY 27, 2026**

PUBLIC SESSION

**TITLE: ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL YEAR
CALENDARS: 2026-2027**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Elementary and Secondary School Year Calendars for the 2026-2027 school year, as presented.

Prepared by: Domenic Massi, Superintendent of Education

Presented by: Domenic Massi, Superintendent of Education

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

Date: January 27, 2026



REPORT TO THE BOARD JANUARY 27, 2026

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL YEAR CALENDARS: 2026-2027

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The *Education Act, Regulation 304 - School Year Calendar, Professional Activity Days* outlines the requirements and timelines for preparing and submission of school year calendars to the Ministry of Education for approval.

For the 2026-2027 school year calendars, there are 195 possible school days between September 1, 2026 and June 30, 2027. Within this total, elementary and secondary schools must have a minimum of 194 school days, of which seven (7) days must be designated as professional activity days. Secondary schools may have a maximum of ten (10) instructional days set as examination days. The remaining school days shall be instructional days.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

The 2026-2027 School Year Calendar Committee met to discuss and review the draft calendar and the consultation process.

Members of the 2026-2027 School Year Calendar Committee are:

Domenic Massi	Superintendent (Chair)
Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells	Superintendent
Gino Pizzoferrato	Superintendent
Antonio Cardamone	Elementary Principal
Lou Stranges	Secondary Principal
Anthony Corapi	Coordinator of Staff Development
Anthony Stranges	C.U.P.E. President
Jennifer McArthur	Niagara Elementary Unit OECTA
Joseph Sorrenti	Niagara Elementary Unit OECTA
Brian O'Rourke	Niagara Secondary Unit OECTA
Laura Thomas	Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee
Monique Somma	S.E.A.C.

The consultation process provided the elementary and secondary draft calendars to all elementary and secondary Principals, Vice-Principals, Catholic School Council Chairs/Co-Chairs, the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (NCPIC), the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), OECTA Elementary and Secondary Presidents, CUPE President and staff for feedback by February 2, 2026.

Simultaneously, there has been on-going consultation with the co-terminus Board to achieve a similar school year calendar, where possible.

SUMMARY OF THE ATTACHED CALENDARS

Highlights of the Proposed School Year Calendars for 2026-2027.

Professional Activity Days

In accordance with the Education Act, Regulation 304 - School Year Calendar, the following seven (7) days have been identified as Professional Activity Days.

Elementary:

Wednesday, September 2, 2026
Thursday, September 3, 2026
Monday, October 26, 2026
Friday, November 27, 2026
Friday, January 15, 2027
Friday, April 30, 2027
Friday, June 4, 2027

Secondary:

Wednesday, September 2, 2026
Thursday, September 3, 2026
Monday, October 26, 2026
Friday, November 27, 2026
Friday, January 29, 2027
Friday, April 30, 2027
Friday, June 30, 2027

Secondary Examination Days

Semester 1 – Friday, January 22, 2027 to Thursday, January 28, 2027
Semester 2 – Wednesday, June 23, 2027 to Tuesday, June 29, 2027

Board and Civic Holidays

Civic Holiday	Monday, August 3, 2026
Labour Day	Monday, September 7, 2026
Thanksgiving Day	Monday, October 12, 2026
Christmas Break	Monday, December 21, 2026 – Friday, January 1, 2027
Family Day	Monday, February 15, 2027
March Break	Monday, March 15 to Friday, March 19, 2027
Good Friday	Friday, March 26, 2027
Easter Monday	Monday, March 29, 2027
Victoria Day	Monday, May 24, 2027
Canada Day	Thursday, July 1, 2027

To comply with the timelines outlined in *Regulation 304 - School Year Calendar*, school boards are required to submit Board approved school year calendars to the Ministry of Education by March 1, 2026 and Board approved **regular** school year calendars to the Ministry of Education by May 1, 2026.

Based on feedback from the consultation process, discussions with the School Year Calendar Committee, Senior Administrative Council and the coterminous board, the 2026-2027 Elementary and Secondary School Year Calendars will be submitted immediately following the Board Meeting of February 24, 2026 for approval.

Appendix A: *Proposed Elementary School Year Calendars for 2026-2027*

Appendix B: *Proposed Secondary School Year Calendars for 2026-2027*

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Elementary and Secondary School Year Calendars for the 2026-2027 school year, as presented.

Prepared by: Domenic Massi, Superintendent of Education

Presented by: Domenic Massi, Superintendent of Education

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

Date: January 27, 2026

School Year Calendar 2026 - 2027

 Legend ► **H** - Statutory Holiday

E - Scheduled Examination Day

P - Professional Activity Day

B - Board Designated Holiday

 Half Day

ELEMENTARY DRAFT

Month	Number of Instructional Days	Number of Professional Activity Days	Number of Scheduled Examination Days	1 st Week					2 nd Week					3 rd Week					4 th Week					5 th Week				
				M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
August 2026				3 H	4	5	6	7	10	11	12	13	14	17	18	19	20	21	24	25	26	27	28	31				
September 2026	17	2			1 P	2 P	3 B	4 H	7	8	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	21	22	23	24	25	28	29	30		
October 2026	20	1				1 P	2	5	6	7	8	9	12 H	13	14	15	16	19	20	21	22	23	26 P	27	28	29	30	
November 2026	20	1		2	3	4	5	6	9	10	11	12	13	16	17	18	19	20	23	24	25	26	27 P	30				
December 2026	14				1	2	3	4	7	8	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	21 B	22 B	23 B	24 B	25 B	28	29	30	31	
January 2027	19	1					1 B	4	5	6	7	8	11	12	13	14	15 P	18	19	20	21	22	25	26	27	28	29	
February 2027	19			1	2	3	4	5	8	9	10	11	12	15 H	16	17	18	19	22	23	24	25	26					
March 2027	16			1	2	3	4	5	8	9	10	11	12	15 B	16 B	17 B	18 B	19 B	22	23	24	25	26 H	29	30	31		
April 2027	21	1					1	2	5	6	7	8	9	12	13	14	15	16	19	20	21	22	23	26	27	28	29	30 P
May 2027	20			3	4	5	6	7	10	11	12	13	14	17	18	19	20	21	24 H	25	26	27	28	31				
June 2027	21	1				1	2	3	4 P	7	8	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	21	22	23	24	25	28	29	30	
July 2027							1 H	2	5	6	7	8	9	12	13	14	15	16	19	20	21	22	23	26	27	28	29	30
TOTAL	187	7	N/A	Note: The 2026-2027 calendar provides for 196 possible school days between September 1, 2026 and June 30, 2027. The school year shall include a minimum of 194 school days of which three days must be designated as professional activity days with respect to specific provincial education priorities as outlined in the Policy/Program Memoranda 151 and up to four extra days may be designated by the board as professional activity days. The remaining school days shall be instructional days. The boards may designate up to ten instructional days as examination days																								

Legend ► **H** - Statutory Holiday

E - Scheduled Examination Day

P - Professional Activity Day

B - Board Designated Holiday

 Half Day

School Year Calendar 2026 - 2027

SECONDARY DRAFT CALENDAR

Month	Number of Instructional Days	Number of Professional Activity Days	Number of Scheduled Examination Days	1 st Week					2 nd Week					3 rd Week					4 th Week					5 th Week				
				M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
August 2026				3 H	4	5	6	7	10	11	12	13	14	17	18	19	20	21	24	25	26	27	28	31				
September 2026	17	2			1	2	P	P	B	7	8	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	21	22	23	24	25	28	29	30	
October 2026	20	1					1	2	5	6	7	8	9	12 H	13	14	15	16	19	20	21	22	23	P	27	28	29	30
November 2026	20	1		2	3	4	5	6	9	10	11	12	13	16	17	18	19	20	23	24	25	26	P	30				
December 2026	14				1	2	3	4	7	8	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	21	22	23	24	25	28	29	30	31	
January 2027	14	1	5					1 B	4	5	6	7	8	11	12	13	14	15	18	19	20	21	22 E	25 E	26 E	27 E	29 P	
February 2027	19			1	2	3	4	5	8	9	10	11	12	15 H	16	17	18	19	22	23	24	25	26					
March 2027	16			1	2	3	4	5	8	9	10	11	12	15 B	16 B	17 B	18 B	19 B	22	23	24	25	26 H	29 H	30	31		
April 2027	21	1					1	2	5	6	7	8	9	12	13	14	15	16	19	20	21	22	23	26 P	27	28	29	30
May 2027	20			3	4	5	6	7	10	11	12	13	14	17	18	19	20	21	24 H	25	26	27	28	31				
June 2027	16	1	5		1	2	3	4	7	8	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	21	22	23 E	24 E	25 E	28 E	29 P			
July 2027							1	2	5	6	7	8	9	12	13	14	15	16	19	20	21	22	23	26	27	28	29	30
TOTAL	177	7	10	Note: The 2026-2027 calendar provides for 196 possible school days between September 1, 2026 and June 30, 2027. The school year shall include a minimum of 194 school days of which three days must be designated as professional activity days with respect to specific provincial education priorities as outlined in the Policy/Program Memoranda 151 and up to four extra days may be designated by the board as professional activity days. The remaining school days shall be instructional days. The boards may designate up to ten instructional days as examination days																								

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 27, 2026**

PUBLIC SESSION

TITLE: 2026 BOARD COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the 2026 Board Committee Membership, as presented.

Prepared by: Chair Di Lorenzo
Vice-Chair Burkholder

Presented by: Chair Di Lorenzo

Recommended by: Chair Di Lorenzo

Date: January 27, 2026



2026 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP FORM

Members to the Committees are appointed by the Chair of the Board in consultation with the Vice-Chair of the Board.

STATUTORY COMMITTEES	TRUSTEE MEMBERSHIP REQUIRED	2026 MEMBERSHIP
<i>Audit Committee</i> <i>O. Reg. 361/10, s. 7 (1). The term of office of a member of the audit committee who is a board member shall be determined by the board but shall not exceed four years.</i>	<i>3 Trustees required</i>	Natalia Benoit Joe Bruzzese Larry Huibers
<i>Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (N.C.P.I.C.)</i>	<i>2 Trustees required</i>	Joe Bruzzese Larry Huibers
<i>Special Education Advisory Committee (S.E.A.C.)</i>	<i>2 Trustees required & 1 Alternate</i>	Natalia Benoit Jim Marino Danny Di Lorenzo (Alternate)
<i>Supervised Alternative Learning Committee (S.A.L. Committee)</i>	<i>2 Trustees required</i>	Danny Di Lorenzo Paul Turner
STANDING COMMITTEES	TRUSTEE MEMBERSHIP REQUIRED	2026 MEMBERSHIP
<i>Disciplinary Hearing Committee</i> <i>NOTE: All Trustees serve as alternates for this Committee only</i>	<i>3 Trustees required</i>	Rhianon Burkholder Danny Di Lorenzo Paul Turner
AD HOC COMMITTEES	TRUSTEE MEMBERSHIP REQUIRED	2026 MEMBERSHIP
<i>Blessed Trinity Catholic Elementary and Secondary Family of Schools Attendance Area Ad Hoc Committee</i>	<i>3 Trustees required</i>	Larry Huibers Doug Joyner Danny Di Lorenzo
<i>Denis Morris, Holy Cross, and Saint Francis Catholic Elementary and Secondary Family of Schools Attendance Area Ad Hoc Committee</i>	<i>3 Trustees required</i>	Natalia Benoit Rhianon Burkholder Larry Huibers
<i>Director's Performance Appraisal Committee</i> <i>NOTE: Term of membership is from July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 for this Committee only</i>	<i>4 Trustees required</i>	Rhianon Burkholder Danny Di Lorenzo Larry Huibers Jim Marino
<i>Growth and Retention Ad Hoc Committee - TBC</i>	<i>3 Trustees required</i>	Joe Bruzzese Danny Di Lorenzo Paul Turner
<i>Lakeshore Catholic Elementary and Secondary Family of Schools Attendance Area Ad Hoc Committee</i>	<i>3 Trustees required</i>	Rhianon Burkholder Danny Di Lorenzo Paul Turner
<i>Notre Dame College Catholic Elementary and Secondary Family of Schools Attendance Area Ad Hoc Committee</i>	<i>3 Trustees required</i>	Rhianon Burkholder Danny Di Lorenzo Paul Turner
<i>Saint Michael and Saint Paul Catholic Elementary and Secondary Family of Schools Attendance Area Ad Hoc Committee</i>	<i>3 Trustees required</i>	Joe Bruzzese Doug Joyner Jim Marino