

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
MEETING APRIL 28, 2026**

PUBLIC SESSION

**TOPIC: UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE MEETING OF APRIL 14, 2026**

The following recommendations are being presented for the Board's consideration from the Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 14, 2026:

7.1.1 Student Senate – Secondary Policy (100.6.1)

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Student Senate - Secondary Policy (100.6.1), as presented.

7.1.2 Student Senate- Elementary Policy (100.6.2)

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Student Senate – Elementary Policy (100.6.2), as presented.

7.1.3 Student Trustees Policy (100.6.4)

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Student Trustees Policy (100.6.4), as presented.

7.1.4 Board and Committee Meeting Dates

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Board and Committee Meeting Dates, as presented.



MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2026

Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee of the Whole of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, held on Tuesday, April 14, 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 Marino

2. Roll Call

Vice-Chair Burkholder noted that Trustee Huibers was asked to be excused and that Trustee Benoit 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, 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 Marino

THAT the Committee of the Whole approve the Agenda of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 14, 2026, 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 March 10, 2026**

Moved by Trustee Joyner

THAT the Committee of the Whole approve the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of March 10, 2026, as presented.

CARRIED

6. **Consent Agenda Items**

6.1 **Staff Development Department Professional Development Opportunities**

Presented for information.

6.2 **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. **Draft Board and Committee Meeting Dates**

Director Cipriano, Director of Education, Secretary/Treasurer presented the Draft Board and Committee Meeting Dates.

2. **K-12 Experiential Learning and Technology**

Director Cipriano, Director of Education, Secretary/Treasurer introduced Joseph Zaroda, Superintendent of Education to provide background information on the K-12 Experiential Learning and Technology in the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

Superintendent Zaroda introduce David Cristelli, Coordinator-Experiential Learning (K-12) Technology, Specialist High Skills Major, Cooperative Education and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program and Fran Vella, Coordinator of Student Services to present the K-12 Experiential Learning and Technology report and shared an update on the Niagara 23rd Annual Skills Competition.

Mr. Cristelli and Ms. Vella answered questions of the Trustees.

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.

The Student Senate student highlight recognizes two students from Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School: Chelsea and Kaylee Timmer. They are outstanding examples of leadership, dedication, and character, representing the values of Holy Cross and their community.

3.2 Senior Staff Good News Update

Senior Staff highlights included:

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells

Assumption Catholic Elementary School students from the Grades 6 and 7 classes participated in and received awards at the Niagara Regional Science and Engineering Fair on April 1, 2026. This regional event has many sponsors supporting science and engineering projects, including Niagara Catholic as a Platinum Event Sponsor.

Emilio participated in the Juvenile division for Grades 5 and 6 students, and won the Outstanding Achievement Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake Award for his "Jolly Eggs" project, a project about braces and how long a time period should be for someone to brush their teeth. Marlowe and Adelaide participated in the Junior Division for Grades 7 and 8 students, and were the recipients of the Brock University Chemistry Award for their Makeup Removers' experiment. Maelle also participated in the Junior Division and won the Structural and Civil Engineering Award for her project, "It's Getting Hot Here", a project about what type of roof shingles retain heat the best.

Congratulations to Assumption Catholic Elementary school students and their teachers, Mr. Ciocca and Mrs. Hitchcock, for their scientific and engineering achievements representing Niagara Catholic.

Superintendent Kinney

Superintendent Kinney highlighted participants and winners that had participated at the Regional Science and Engineering Fair. 40% of the projects this year within the fair were from Niagara Catholic, which is an increase from previous years.

St. Martin Catholic Elementary School, Madeleine Chliszczyk and Audrey Romansky, who won the Brock University Earth Science Award for their "Stars and Constellations and Why They Matter".

St. Ann Catholic Elementary School in Fonthill, Brock University Social Sciences Award went to Leela Tupman for "Insight or Indoctrination".

Canadian Martyrs Catholic Elementary School, Nehal Amini and Miracle Asingya, “Teeth versus Beverages” won the Chemistry Award from Brock University.

Notre Dame Catholic Elementary School, “The Eggsperiment” The Mancuso Chemicals Award went to Brandon Alexsiejuk.

Dennis Morris Catholic High School, the Innovation Science Award that went to Amaya Sahota for her project on “Plant-derived Vascular Scaffolds for Postmastectomy Lactation Restoration, a Regenerative Approach to Mammary Duct Reconstruction. Amaya received a Brock University entrance scholarship for the same project. Amaya also received the Muslim Medical Association of Canada Niagara Chapter Award.

St. Martin Catholic Elementary School, the Ontario Power Generation Award went to Matthew Sourdos for “Proof the Hydrogen is the Next Super Fuel.”

Certificates from OPG went to Giorgia Cagnelli, from St. Ann Catholic Elementary School in Fonthill, and that was the silver medal for “Too Fat to Foam.” A school awards from Juvenile Studio T3 Engineering Award went to St. Ann Catholic Elementary School. It was a very robust participation this year and very successful students.

Superintendent Zaroda

This past weekend, April 10th to 12th, Niagara College buzzed with energy as it hosted the First Robotics competition, welcoming young innovators and their custom-built machines from across Ontario. Dennis Morris Catholic High School High Voltage Team 2852 competed and showcased their incredible teamwork and determination while successfully advancing to the third round of eliminations. Their impressive performance has secured them a spot at the Ontario FIRST Robotics Provincial Championships, held April 16th to 19th at the Niagara Falls Convention Centre. Over these four days, the team will join the province's best to compete, connect with peers, and celebrate the future of technology.

D. GOVERNANCE POLICIES

1. Governance Policies for Recommendation to the Board

1.1. Student Senate -Secondary Policy (100.6.1)

Superintendent Massi presented feedback received from the vetting process and highlighted recommended amendments to the Student Senate – Secondary Policy (100.6.1) following the vetting process.

- No amendment

Moved by Trustee Joyner

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Student Senate – Secondary Policy (100.6.1), as presented.

APPROVED

1.2. Student Senate - Elementary Policy (100.6.2)

Superintendent Massi presented feedback received from the vetting process and highlighted recommended amendments to the Student Senate – Elementary Policy (100.6.2) following the vetting process.

- No amendment

Moved by Trustee Di Lorenzo

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Student Senate – Elementary Policy (100.6.2), as presented.

APPROVED

1.3. Student Trustees Policy (100.4)

Superintendent Massi presented feedback received from the vetting process and highlighted recommended amendments to the Student Trustee Policy (100.4) following the vetting process.

- No amendment

Moved by Trustee Joyner

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Student Trustees Policy (100.4), as presented.

APPROVED

2. Governance Policies Prior to Vetting

2.1. Employee Workplace Harassment Policy (201.7)

Julia Tiessen, Executive Officer of Human Resources, presented the Employee Workplace Harassment Policy (201.7).

- No amendment

The Committee of the Whole requested that the Employee Workplace Harassment Policy (201.7), be vetted from April 14, 2026 to May 28, 2026 with a recommended deadline for presentation to the Committee of the Whole in June 9, 2026, for consideration to the Board in June 16, 2026.

2.2. Employee Workplace Violence Policy (201.11)

Julia Tiessen, Executive Officer of Human Resources presented the Employee Workplace Violence Policy (201.11)

- No amendment

The Committee of the Whole requested that the Employee Workplace Harassment Policy (201.11), be vetted from April 14, 2026 to May 28, 2026 with a recommended deadline for presentation to the Committee of the Whole in June 9, 2026, for consideration to the Board in June 16, 2026.

2.3. Occupational Health & Safety Policy (201.6)

Julia Tiessen, Executive Officer of Human Resources presented the Occupational Health & Safety Policy (201.6).

- No amendment

The Committee of the Whole requested that the Occupational Health & Safety Policy (201.6), be vetted from April 14, 2026 to May 28, 2026 with a recommended deadline for presentation to the Committee of the Whole in June 9, 2026, for consideration to the Board in June 16, 2026.

2.4. Attendance Support Program Policy (201.16)

Julia Tiessen, Executive Officer of Human Resources presented the Attendance Support Program Policy (201.16)

The Committee of the Whole suggested the following amendments:

- Chair Di Lorenzo made a motion to send out the Attendance Support Program Policy (201.16) for vetting and when the policy returns to the Board meeting in June for approval it will be renamed, renumbered, and the existing Attendance Support Program Policy (201.6) will be rescinded to adopt the new policy.

Moved by Trustee Joyner

THAT the Attendance Support Program Policy (201.16) is sent out for vetting and when the policy returns to the Board Meeting in June for approval it will be renamed renumbered and the existing Attendance Support Program Policy (201.16) will be rescinded to adopt the new policy.

APPROVED

The Committee of the Whole requested that the Attendance Support Program Policy (201.16), be vetted from April 14, 2026 to May 28, 2026 with a recommended deadline for presentation to the Committee of the Whole in June 9, 2026, for consideration to the Board in June 16, 2026.

3. Governance Policy Review Schedule

Director Cipriano presented the Governance Policy Review Schedule.

E. INFORMATION

1. Trustee Information

1.1 Intermediate Mathletes Finals – April 28, 2026

Director Cipriano presented the Intermediate Mathletes Finals for information.

1.2 Celebrating Excellence – May 5, 2026

Director Cipriano presented the Celebrating Excellence Awards Ceremony Invitation for information.

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

1.3 NCDSB Graduation Dates – June 2026

Director Cipriano presented the June 2026 Graduation Dates for information.

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

1.4 Secondary Instrumental Music Festival – April 22, 2026

Director Cipriano presented the Secondary Instrumental Music Festival Invitation for information.

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

F. OTHER BUSINESS

1. General Discussion to Plan for Future Action

Nil

G. BUSINESS IN CAMERA

Moved by Trustee Marino

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 7:43 p.m. and reconvened at 7:53 p.m.

H. REPORT ON THE IN-CAMERA SESSION

Moved by Trustee Marino

THAT the Committee of the Whole report the motions from the In Camera Session of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 14, 2026.

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 March 10, 2026, as presented.

CARRIED (Item G1)

A discussion on Capital Projects took place.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Turner

THAT the April 14, 2026 Committee of the Whole Meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Rhianon Burkholder
Vice-Chair of the Board

Camillo Cipriano
Director of Education/Secretary -Treasurer

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
APRIL 28, 2026**

PUBLIC SESSION

TITLE: STUDENT SENTATE - SECONDARY POLICY (100.6.1)

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Student Senate –
Secondary Policy (100.6.1) as presented.

Prepared by: Domenic Massi, Superintendent of Education

Presented by: Domenic Massi, Superintendent of Education

Recommended by: Committee of the Whole

Date: April 28, 2026



Niagara Catholic District School Board
STUDENT SENATE – SECONDARY POLICY
STATEMENT OF GOVERNANCE POLICY

100 - Board

Policy No 100.6.1

Adopted Date: March 27, 2007

Latest Reviewed/Revised Date: March 28, 2023

In keeping with the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the Niagara Catholic District School Board values the leadership, participation, and voice of students and their Secondary Student Senate representatives.

The Niagara Catholic District School Board recognizes the enhanced benefits for students when they have opportunities to share and represent the perspectives and insights from their school communities.

To assist the Student Trustees on the Board, and the Student Representative for the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (NCPIC), the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), and the Growth and Retention Ad Hoc Committee, the Niagara Catholic Student Senate has been established with representatives from each of the Board's Catholic secondary schools.

The Student Senate provides a forum for student servant leadership, the exchange of ideas, discussion, consultation, and communication through its Co-Chairs the Student Trustees of the Board, Director of Education, Senior Administrative Council and all students in the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

The Director of Education will issue *Administrative Operational Procedures* for the implementation of this policy.

References

- [Education Statutes and Regulations of Ontario](#)
- [Ontario Municipal Conflict of Interest Act](#)

Adopted Date:	June 27, 2000
Revision History:	September 25, 2001 April 24, 2012 April 23, 2013 February 26, 2019 March 28, 2023

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
APRIL 28, 2026**

PUBLIC SESSION

TITLE: STUDENT SENTATE – ELEMENTARY POLICY (100.6.2)

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Student Senate – Elementary Policy (100.6.2) as presented.

Prepared by: Domenic Massi, Superintendent of Education

Presented by: Domenic Massi, Superintendent of Education

Recommended by: Committee of the Whole

Date: April 28, 2026



Niagara Catholic District School Board
STUDENT SENATE – ELEMENTARY POLICY
STATEMENT OF GOVERNANCE POLICY

100 - Board

Policy No 100.6.2

Adopted Date: April 23, 2013

Latest Reviewed/Revised Date: March 28, 2023

In keeping with the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the Niagara Catholic District School Board values the leadership, participation, and voice of students and their Elementary Student Senate representatives.

The Niagara Catholic District School Board recognizes the enhanced benefits for students when they have opportunities to share and represent the perspectives and insights from their school communities.

To assist the Student Trustees on the Board and the Student Representatives for the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (NCPIC), Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), and the Growth and Retention Ad Hoc Committee, the Niagara Catholic Elementary Student Senate has been established with elementary representatives from each Family of Schools within the Board.

The Elementary Student Senate provides a forum for student servant leadership, the exchange of ideas, discussion, consultation, peer mentorship and communication through its Co-Chairs to the Secondary Student Senate, the Student Trustees on the Niagara Catholic District School Board and the Director of Education.

The Director of Education will issue *Administrative Operational Procedures* for the implementation of this policy.

References

- [*Education Statutes and Regulations of Ontario*](#)
- [*Ontario Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*](#)
- [*Niagara Catholic District School Board Policies/Procedures*](#)
 - [*Student Senate – Secondary Policy \(100.6.1\)*](#)

Adopted Date:	April 23, 2013
Revision History:	February 26, 2019 March 28, 2023

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
APRIL 28, 2026**

PUBLIC SESSION

TITLE: STUDENT TRUSTEES POLICY (100.6.4)

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Student Trustees Policy (100.6.4) as presented.

Prepared by: Domenic Massi, Superintendent of Education

Presented by: Domenic Massi, Superintendent of Education

Recommended by: Committee of the Whole

Date: April 28, 2026



Niagara Catholic District School Board

STUDENT TRUSTEES POLICY

STATEMENT OF GOVERNANCE POLICY

100 – Board

Policy No 100.4

Adopted Date: March 28, 1998

Latest Reviewed/Revised Date: January 31, 2023

In keeping with the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the Board of Trustees values the leadership, perspectives and participation of Student Trustees at Board meetings, Board committee meetings, and Board activities and events. Student Trustees represent the interest of all students of the Board, promoting a student-focused voice to support Catholic education, equity, and student achievement and well-being.

In accordance with legislation, the Niagara Catholic District School Board shall have two Student Trustees on the Board.

To be eligible to serve as a Niagara Catholic Student Trustee, student nominees will hold the following qualifications:

- be actively supportive of the distinctive character, philosophy and goals of Catholic education, respect the faith and traditions of the Catholic Church, and support the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board.
- be enrolled as a full-time student, in a Niagara Catholic secondary school for the duration of their term.
- be a member of the Secondary Student Senate;
- provide a signed parental permission to be a Student Trustee if under 18 years of age.
- be endorsed by the principal of their Catholic secondary school.
- conduct themselves with proper demeanour at all times upholding the Mission, Vision, Values and Policies and Administrative Operational Procedures of the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

Terms of Office

Student Trustees will serve for a term from August 1 during the year of their election to July 31 during the final year of their term. Student Trustees shall be elected by the Niagara Catholic Student Senate. In the event that an incoming Senate representative is not available to vote on the date of election, the Student Council President representing that school may vote in their place.

One of the two Student Trustees must be enrolled in Grade 10 at a Niagara Catholic secondary school at the time of the election and must be eligible to serve a two-year term.

This same Student Trustee will have one year of experience as a Student Trustee when they continue in office the following school year.

The Board shall provide the Ministry of Education with the names of the Student Trustees elected, no later than 30 days after the date of the election or by-election as required by legislation.

The Director of Education will issue *Administrative Operational Procedures* for the implementation of this policy.

References

- [**Education Statutes and Regulations of Ontario \(Reg. 07/07\)**](#)
- [**Ontario Municipal Conflict of Interest Act**](#)
- **Niagara Catholic District School Board Policies/Procedures**
 - [**Board By-Laws Policy \(100.1\)**](#)
 - [**Trustee Code of Conduct Policy \(100.12\)**](#)
 - [**Student Senate Policy \(100.6.1 and 100.6.2\)**](#)

Adopted Date:	March 24, 1998
Revision History:	June 27, 2000 September 25, 2001 March 27, 2007 April 24, 2012 March 20, 2018 January 31, 2023

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
APRIL 28, 2026**

PUBLIC SESSION

**TITLE: BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETING DATES CALENDAR
2026-2027**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Board and Committee Meeting Dates Calendar 2026-2027, as presented.

Prepared by: Corporate Services

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

Recommended by: Committee of the Whole

Date: April 28, 2026



REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE APRIL 14, 2026

BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETING DATES CALENDAR 2026-2027

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At the February 24, 2026 Board Meeting, the Board approved the 2026-2027 School Year Calendar for submission to the Ministry of Education. On March 2, 2026 the Board was notified by the Ministry of Education that the “electronic school year calendar submission meets the requirements of Sections 2, 3, and 4 of Regulation 304 – School Year Calendar, Professional Activity Days and is deemed compliant for posting”.

Annually, staff utilizes the approved Board and Ministry of Education school year calendar to design the Board School Year Calendar and Meeting Dates along with a calendar of dates for school and system activities, celebrations, events, faith formation, meetings and professional development.

In compliance with the Niagara Catholic District School Board By-Laws on Annual Organizational Meeting (Section 7), Regular Meetings of the Board (Section 8) and Committee Meetings (Section 19), meeting date recommendations from the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (NCPIC), the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and the Audit Committee along with historical annual meeting date adjustments for the Committee of the Whole and Board Meetings in December and June, a draft Board and Committee Meeting Dates Calendar 2026-2027 is presented for the consideration of the Committee of the Whole (Appendix A).

When the Board approves the Board and Committee Meeting Dates Calendar 2026-2027, staff will place a copy on Board websites and notify Board Committees and staff.

Appendix A – Draft Board and Committee Meeting Dates Calendar 2026-2027

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Draft Board and Committee Meeting Dates Calendar 2026-2027, as presented.

Prepared By: Corporate Services
Presented By: Camillo Cipriano, Director of Education/Secretary-Treasurer
Recommended By: Camillo Cipriano, Director of Education/Secretary-Treasurer
Date: April 14, 2024



NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

2026-2027 School Year Calendar & Meeting Dates

SEPTEMBER 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

OCTOBER 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

NOVEMBER 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

DECEMBER 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

JANUARY 2027						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

FEBRUARY 2027						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

MARCH 2027						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

APRIL 2027						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2027						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

JUNE 2027						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	*30			

JULY 2027						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

AUGUST 2027						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

REGULAR SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

- Committee of the Whole Meeting
- Supervised Alternative Learning Meeting
- Board Meeting
- Annual Organizational Meeting of the Board
- Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting
- Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting
- Audit Committee Meetings

- 6:30 p.m. 2nd Tuesday of each month or as Noted
- 2:00 p.m. 3rd Wednesday of each month or as Noted
- 6:30 p.m. 4th Tuesday of each month or as Noted
- 6:00 p.m. 4th Tuesday of November
- 6:30 p.m. 1st Wednesday of each month or as Noted
- 6:30 p.m. 1st Thursday bi-monthly or as Noted
- 10:00 a.m. As Noted

- CW
- SAL
- BD
- ORG
- SEAC
- NCPIC
- AC

- Elementary P.A. Day
- Secondary P.A. Day
- Elementary & Secondary P.A. Day
- Statutory/Other
- School Holidays
- Secondary Exams

* Elementary Last Day of School June 30, 2027

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
MEETING APRIL 28, 2026**

PUBLIC SESSION

**TOPIC: APPROVED MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC) MEETING OF
MARCH 4, 2026**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board receive the Approved Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of March 4, 2026, as presented for information.



NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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

April 8, 2026

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, held on Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 6:30 p.m., at the Niagara Launch Centre, Seaway Mall, 800 Niagara Street, Welland, ON L3C 5Z4

Chair Monique Somma called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. **Land Acknowledgement**
Chair Somma 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/ Cynthia Peterson	Autism Ontario Niagara Region	X			
Alyson Wilson/Melissa Sullivan	Bethesda Services			X	
Monique Somma (CHAIR)	Community Living (Pelham/Welland)	X			
Sara Wencil & 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/ Katrina Arcand	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, Natalia Benoit			X		
Trustee, Jim Marino		X			

Regrets: Cindi Lee Ecker-Flagg, Indigenous Representative
Alyson Wilson/Melissa Sullivan, Bethesda Services

The following staff were in attendance:

Gino Pizzoferrato, Superintendent of Education, Jenna Young, Roxanne Rees, Nicole Royer, Grace Brochu, Lisa Clark, Susy Walsh, Jim Di Gioia, Kelly Keighan, Ashley Prohaszka, Vincent Mancuso, Julia Nicholson-Clarke, Jessica Mastroianni

4. **Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by: Trustee Marino

Seconded by: DJ Holmes

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of April 8th, 2026.

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 March 4, 2026**

Moved by: Trustee Marino

Seconded by: DJ Holmes

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of March 4, 2026 as presented.

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATIONS

1. **Susy Walsh – Resource Centre Update**

Susy Walsh presented:

- The pilot aims to provide students with a small, quiet setting to develop essential life skills, including social-emotional regulation, leadership, and communication with the goal of transferring these skills back into the regular classroom and home life.
- Students have shown significant growth in managing their behavior and interactions:

- Moving from physical outbursts to using words, deep breathing and waiting turns.
 - Better cooperation, sharing, and problem-solving among peers.
- The program bridges the gap between school and home:
 - Students are learning the neuroscience of their own brains, helping them understand why they feel certain emotions.
 - Parents report a reduction in “shutting down” during homework and an increased ability for students to step away and refresh rather than reacting aggressively.
- The pilot is successfully creating a “circle of support” that empowers students to move from frustration and silence to independence and active participation in their communities.

2. **Jim Di Gioia – Annual Special Education Plan Review**

Jim Di Gioia presented:

- An outline of the mandatory annual review of the Special Education Plan for Niagara Catholic, ensuring it remains compliant with the Education Act.
 - This is a retrospective review – it encapsulates the actions of the current school year rather than planning for the next.
 - The Education Act requires all school boards to maintain and annually update a special education plan.
 - SEAC is a central part of this process, providing consultation and reviewing all proposed amendments.
 - Updates include statistical data, staffing, committee logistics and annual progress

C. **POLICY REVIEW – Monique Somma**

No policy reviews.

D. **CHAIR’S REPORT-Chair Somma**

Chair Somma reported:

- Letters received from the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board SEAC and Huron Superior Catholic District School Board SEAC, addressed to the Minister of Education in support of retaining the elected Trustees.

A motion was put forth for SEAC Chair Somma to draft a new letter of support.

Moved by: Kristine Donato

Seconded by: DJ Holmes

THAT SEAC prepare a letter of support for the advocacy for maintaining elected trustees.

CARRIED

E. AGENCY REPORTS

1. Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – Aishah Sonekan

No report.

2. Niagara Children’s Centre – Chris Tawil

Chris Tawil reported:

- The center is preparing for a two-day site visit from the Commission of Accreditation of Rehab Facilities on April 14-15
- 7th Annual Parent and Caregiver Conference is April 25. Held from 9 am – 12 pm at the Four Points Sheraton. Registration is free for anyone raising a child with special needs in Niagara via their website.
- Help Kids Shine Fundraiser is May 1. The center’s largest annual fundraiser kicks off with live radio broadcasts from the facility.
- Transition to School provides students with ongoing support. Observation visits are currently being booked.
- A full list of seasonal activities is available in the center’s digital Spring Guide and on their website.

3. Pathstone Mental Health – Michelle Toy

Michelle Toy reported:

- Expanded hours at certain locations, some now open 5 days a week, with evening hours extended until 8:00 p.m.
- As of April 1, the Crisis Support Line has been eliminated to facilitate the increase in face-to-face interactions.

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

No report.

5. Inclusion West Niagara – Patricia Ferrie

No report.

6. Down Syndrome Niagara - Andrea Pede

Andrea Pede reported:

- March 21 was World Down Syndrome Day
- March 23 schools promoted the Rock Your Socks campaign where students and staff were encouraged to wear bright mismatched socks to spark conversations about Down syndrome.
- A successful bowling event was held on March 21 at Play More Social, featuring a VIP experience for children.
- The focus this year was “Together Against Loneliness” emphasizing the importance of building friendships and reducing social isolation.
- Annual Trivia Night is April 18 at the Merritton Community Center from 6:00 p.m.- 10:00 p.m.
- Future Outings:
 - April 26: Fallsview Water Park
 - June 28: Safari Niagara
 - July 12: River Lions Game
 - August 16: Summer Picnic
 - August 30: Blue Jays Game
 - September 13: Caregiver Golf
 - September: Annual Friendship Walk
- Most upcoming events are members-only, and families are encouraged to register through the Down Syndrome Niagara Website.

7. Mainstream – Katrina Arcand

No report.

8. Bethesda Services – Melissa Sullivan/Alyson Wilson

No report.

9. Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Cynthia Peterson

Cynthia Peterson reported:

- World Autism Day was on April 2
 - Schools participated by wearing tie-dye T-shirts. The tie-dye theme was chosen to celebrate the “spectrum” and the unique individuality of every person.
- Summer Camp registration is currently open
 - The camp offers 1:1 support for those who need it
 - Runs full five-day weeks, running from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
 - Includes daily swimming, splash pad visits, and special outings to the zoo.

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

No report.

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:

- Schools held celebrations to observe Holy Week and reflect on the religious significance of the day.
- World Down Syndrome Day was celebrated with a “Rock Your Socks” event to show support.
- Upcoming events:
 - Time to Shine Formal in May, at Saint Francis. The theme is “Disco and Diamonds” and is organized by the community to enjoy.

I. STAFF REPORTS

1. Elementary Principal – Susy Walsh

Susy Walsh reported:

- Great success with the new Boccia sets each school received, and the in-school training by the para-athletes.

2. Secondary Principal – Nicole Royer and Roxanne Rees

Nicole Royer and Roxanne Rees reported:

- March 13th is the deadline for option sheets for numbers and to get account receptions.
- Special education students are given a broad-based grading system in class based on socialization, skills, independence and organization.
- Planning for the “Time to Shine Formal” is underway, including a photobooth, meal planning and group planning

3. Student Support – Jim Di Gioia

Jim Di Gioia presented:

- S.L.A.M. Summer Camp – Ages 6-11 In-Person Summer Camp
 - The Student Support Department has provided funding to the Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region (LDANR) to support student participation in a one-week fully funded S.L.A.M. Camp. The program provides engaging literacy activities that build phonics skills, sight word recognition, and reading fluency. Elementary schools were able to submit names of students who meet the criteria to participate in the program.
 - S.L.A.M. Camp is a full-day summer camp designed for children aged 6-11 who are one or more years behind in literacy due to a diagnosed, suspected, or identified reading disability (like dyslexia). Campers participate in engaging literacy activities that build phonics skills, sight word recognition, and reading fluency. Our approach is hands-on and playful, helping kids feel confident and capable as they strengthen their reading abilities.
- Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility and Inclusion Training
 - Niagara Catholic District School Board’s Accessibility Committee and The Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) are working towards a system-wide goal of educating our youth, staff and community members about accessibility, disability, and inclusion.
 - Principals, VPs, and ERTs have been invited to participate in the Rick Hansen Foundation’s Educator Inclusion and Accessibility Training Course, a module-based course focused on disability inclusion, accessibility, and equitable practices, with an emphasis on understanding the lived experiences of youth with disabilities. The course is available as of April 13th.
- Gifted Module
 - The next elementary Gifted Education module is planned for April 15th and will be a faith-centered day of engaging, hands-on learning that connects spirituality with problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork. Through collaborative activities focused on faith, guidance, and community, students will reflect and discuss their learning while building a strong sense of connection and belonging.

4. Superintendent Pizzoferrato – Gino Pizzoferrato

Superintendent Pizzoferrato reported:

- Secondary school transition initiatives:
 - Each secondary school is receiving a dedicated budget to fund activities that engage students and parents from feeder elementary schools

- The program now targets students as young as Grade 6 to demystify the high school transition process and build staff capacity regarding various secondary pathways.
- The goal is to provide parents and students with comprehensive information and awareness before they have to make official school program choices in Grade 8
- The department is currently drafting a transparent process and policy regarding EVAC Chairs for students with mobility needs. They are seeking the following from community partners:
 - Any specific operational procedures or policies from community groups that consider the unique needs of the individuals they serve.
 - Community members with relevant documentation or insights on evacuation safety and equipment are encouraged to share them to assist in the drafting phase.
- The board is currently investigating installation requirements and facilities support, the role of vendors in equipment maintenance and training, and funding models and financial responsibility.

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

No report.

K. NIAGARA CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

No report.

L. NEW BUSINESS/AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Somma addressed a procedural issue regarding the March 4, 2026 SEAC meeting. It was determined that a conflict of interest during the vote to support elected Trustees resulted in a loss of quorum. Consequently, the vote has been declared null and void.

M. NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, May 6th, 2026 at 6:30 p.m., at Inclusion West Niagara, Grimsby.

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

O. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Trustee Marino

Seconded by: Patricia Ferrie

THAT the April 8, 2026 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee be adjourned.

CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.
