



NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2009

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, held on Monday, February 23, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. at Denis Morris Catholic High School in Niagara Falls.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Burtnik.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Opening Prayer

Opening Prayers were led by Trustee Scalzi.

2. Roll Call

Moved by Trustee Dekker
Seconded by Trustee Belcastro

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board excuse Trustee Maurice Charbonneau from attending the Special Board Meeting of February 23, 2009.

CARRIED

Trustee	Present	Excused
John Belcastro	✓	
Kathy Burtnik	✓	
Maurice Charbonneau		✓
Gary Crole	✓	
John Dekker	✓	
Frank Fera	✓	
Ed Nieuwesteeg	✓	
Tony Scalzi	✓	
Student Trustees		
Ashley McGuire		✓
Christina Volpini		✓

The following staff were in attendance:

John Crocco, Director of Education; **Yolanda Baldasaro**, **Rob Ciarlo**, **Frank Iannantuono**, **Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells**, Superintendents of Education; **Larry Reich**, Superintendent of Business & Financial Services; **James Woods**, Controller of Plant; **Jennifer Brailey**, Manager of Board Services and Communications; **Sherry Morena**, Recording Secretary

3. **Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by Trustee Fera

Seconded by Trustee Scalzi

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Agenda of the Special Board Meeting of February 23, 2009, as presented.

CARRIED

Director Crocco informed the audience that one St. Catharines Elementary Presentation would be heard tonight and that the decision to hear the Presentation was made in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board and was supported by all Trustees. Ms. Thoms letter was included in the Correspondence Section of the Special Board Meeting Agenda of Wednesday, February 18, 2009. Following a conversation between the Director and Ms. Thoms, it was clarified that the letter received by the Director was intended to be presented as a Delegation and not Correspondence.

4. **Disclosure of Interest**

No Disclosures of Interest were declared with any items on the agenda.

5. **Overview of Special Board Meeting Procedures**

Chairperson Burtnik welcomed all those in attendance, and gave an overview of the Special Board Meeting Procedures. It was reiterated that this Meeting is being held in order to provide an opportunity for public input and for the Board to listen and ask questions of clarification regarding pupil accommodation review.

Chairperson Burtnik affirmed that the recommendations resulting from the Special Board Meetings and subsequent meetings of Senior Staff will be presented in a Senior Staff Follow-Up report at the March 10, 2009 Committee of the Whole Meeting.

The audience was advised of the approved Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines for Public Input and the Delegation Application Process, which required written applications requesting the opportunity to appear as a delegation be submitted to the Director of Education no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, February 10, 2009.

Trustees received copies of the written submissions on February 10, 2009 allowing them the opportunity to thoroughly review the submissions prior to the presentations.

B. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

1. **Pupil Accommodation Review Highlights and Recommendation**

John Crocco, Director of Education, presented the Pupil Accommodation Review highlights and recommendations currently being proposed as a result of the Accommodation Review Committee recommendations and the subsequent Senior Staff review.

Director Crocco reviewed the process followed along with the approved schedule of events, and stated that all presentations and correspondence are posted on the Board's Website under the Pupil Accommodations Review Tab.

C. DELEGATIONS

PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW (PAR) PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS ST. CATHARINES ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY

1. St. Nicholas Catholic Elementary School

Dagmar Thoms, Community Representative, made a presentation regarding St. Nicholas Catholic Elementary School as it relates to the Pupil Accommodation Review.

The presentation is hereby attached and forms part of the minutes.

2. St. Francis Catholic Secondary School

Sue Hendriks and Patty Rempel, Community Representatives, made a presentation regarding St. Francis Catholic Secondary School as it relates to the Pupil Accommodation Review.

The presentation is hereby attached and forms part of the minutes.

D. TRUSTEE ITEMS& OTHER BUSINESS

E. FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

F. MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION FOR LIFE

G. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Crole

Seconded by Trustee Nieuwesteeg

THAT the February 23, 2009 Special Meeting of the Niagara Catholic District School Board be adjourned.

CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Niagara Catholic District School Board held on February 23, 2009.

Approved on the 24th day of February 2009.

Kathy Burtnik
Chairperson of the Board

John Crocco
Director of Education/Secretary -Treasurer

**PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW (PAR) PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS
DAGMAR THOMS - ST. NICHOLAS CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

January 26, 2009

Mr. Crocco,
Secretary/Treasurer, Mrs. KathyBurtnik
Chair Mr Frank Fera.
Vice-Chair
Trustees of the Niagara Catholic Parents
Principals and Guests



One hundred and fifty-two years ago there was a group of people like us today who were probably discussing how to extend Catholic Education into Southern Ontario. The Sisters of St. Joseph took this task on their shoulders and a Catholic Elementary School opened which they called St. Nicholas.

St. Nicholas was opened one hundred years before we became the Diocese of St. Catharines and nine years before Canada became a nation. As we all know November 9, 2008 was the 50th Anniversary of the Diocese and we are discussing possible closure of St. Nicholas school. With this move we will take the reception of the holy sacraments for our children away from our mother church the Cathedral resulting in the absence of elementary school sacraments forever.

In the event of the closure of St. Nicholas school students would be transferred by bus to St. Denis. Transfer by bus adds complication to an already busy lifestyle; therefore we would lose these students to the public school system due to convenience and school location.

Ladies and Gentlemen I am sure if our ancestors would know the situation today we would still have the original building of St. Nicholas school.

Thank you for your consideration
Sincerely,


Dagmar Thoms
Parent of St. Nicholas School Student

Address 292 Oakdale Ave Apt 405
St Catharines Ontario L2S 2P7
905-688-4308 (home)
cell 905-360-0023

PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW (PAR) PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS
SUE HENDRIKS & PATTY REMPEL
ST. FRANCIS CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL



February 2, 2009

Mr. John Crocco, Director of Education
Niagara Catholic District School Board
427 Rice Road
Welland, ON L3C 7C1

Dear Mr. Crocco

Re: Request for Delegate Presentation

I would like to request the opportunity to address the Board at the February 23rd public meeting regarding the School Valuation Report. Sue Hendriks and Patty Rempel, both parents of children attending St. Francis Catholic Secondary School, will address the Board. Please find attached the commentary that will coincide with a Power Point presentation.

Following is the contact information as requested:

Patty Rempel
96 Queen Street
St. Catharines, ON L2R 5H3
Phone: 905-685-5522 (day & evening)
Fax: 905-687-3325
E-mail: rempe@niagara.com

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patty Rempel".

Patty Rempel

The Case for St Francis

Good evening Mr. Crocco, Superintendents of Education and Board of Trustees. My name is Sue Hendriks and along with Patty Rempel, we are representing the parent community of St Francis Secondary School. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to present to you our Case for St Francis, home of the phoenix.

Our school mascot the phoenix is a beautiful, mythical bird. It is a symbol of the sun, rebirth, resurrection and immortality. It was believed to have died in flames and out of the ashes a new phoenix would rise. St Francis continues to rise above its physical challenges and delivers an exceptionally high quality education in a strong faith based environment.

The accommodation review committee valuation report shows that St Francis falls short behind Denis Morris and Holy Cross by 33 to 36 points.

St Francis lost points in such areas as internal space for learning, number of portables, amount of cafeteria space, condition of school and cost of upgrades.

St Francis ranked the lowest overall on the scoring rubric but it is interesting to note that we lost the greatest number of points in only 5 to 7 out of 44 total questions.

St Francis has developed a reputation of academic excellence that supersedes the building.

EQAO math results show that Niagara Catholic students surpass provincial results in testing .As you can see St Francis students continue to achieve the highest results.

Literacy test results also show outstanding scores from St Francis students.

St Francis offers a large variety of co-curricular activities. Year after year our students experience success and personal growth due not only to their hard work and determination, but also because of the guidance and dedication of our excellent staff and volunteers.

Every Fall St Francis students walk in solidarity with Denis Morris and Holy Cross at a Pilgrimage aimed at raising awareness and funds for the poor in developing countries. Last year over 500 St Francis students participated raising an amazing \$45,000.00. This year's theme was We've Got Soul and over 570 St Francis students and community pulled together raising over \$56,000.00. It was overwhelming for us as parent volunteers to watch over 500 well behaved St Francis students and staff fill half the Market Square and celebrate Mass together with fellow peers at Denis Morris and Holy Cross.

The Christmas gift drive annually gives our students the opportunity to serve others. Last year St Francis collected gifts for Community Care and gift items for 75 bags and baskets that were distributed throughout our region.

St Francis is a community school. Perhaps you have read some of the letters to the editor in the St Catharines Standard where members of our community have written in support of St Francis. Terry Rempel wrote "People are voting with their feet and flooding St Francis. St Francis has earned and maintained a widely known reputation for excellence." Mike Bonomi echoes this when he wrote "St Francis has established a very positive reputation and has achieved high standards both academically and athletically. You simply cannot duplicate or replace that."

Electronically, past and present students of St Francis are reaching out through Facebook. The site Save the Future of St Francis is 160 members strong and the message is clear. I invite you to go online and read for yourself all the positive comments that past and present students have to say about their school.

On December 2, 2008 Senior Staff presented their recommendations to the Niagara Catholic District school board for consideration. The parent community of St Francis fully supports the recommendation that the Board maintain all 3 Catholic Secondary schools. It was also encouraging to read that the Senior Staff recommends continuing to apply to the Ministry of Education for additional funding to provide facility plant upgrades to St Francis. However, we are concerned with the proposed boundary review. If the St Francis boundaries are minimized then specialized programs currently offered at St Francis could be at risk. We ask that this point be taken into consideration.

In conclusion, Catholic education will continue to thrive in the Niagara Region only with the shared efforts of parents, students, staff and the school board. St Francis Secondary School, year after year, provides an exceptional learning environment which educates its students academically, socially and spiritually. Declining enrollment is not an issue for us. In fact at our grade 8 open house it was literally standing room only. Our future parents and students showed us in overwhelming numbers that despite a black cloud of possible closure they were choosing us, and more importantly choosing Catholic education. We, the parent community of St Francis, acknowledge the huge responsibility that you have been given in this decision making. We appreciate this time that you have given us to show you some of the many reasons why St Francis along with Holy Cross and Denis Morris, is an essential component of Catholic Secondary Education in Niagara.

Thank you

THE CASE FOR ST. FRANCIS

SLIDE 1 – ST. FRANCIS CATHOLIC SECONDARY

Good evening Mr. Crocco, Superintendents of Education and Board of Trustees. My name is Sue Hendriks and along with Patty Rempel, we are representing the parent community of St. Francis Catholic Secondary School. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to present to you our Case for St. Francis, home of the Phoenix.

SLIDE 2 - INTRODUCTION

Our school mascot the Phoenix is a beautiful, mythical bird. It is a symbol of the sun, rebirth, resurrection and immortality. It was believed to have died in flames and out of the ashes a new phoenix would rise. St. Francis continues to rise above its physical challenges and delivers an exceptionally high quality education in a strong faith based environment.

SLIDE 3 – ARC SCHOOL VALUATION

The accommodation review committee valuation report shows that St. Francis falls short behind Denis Morris and Holy Cross by 33 to 36 points.

SLIDE 4 – ARC SCHOOL VALUATION

St. Francis lost points in such areas as internal space for learning, number of portables, amount of cafeteria space, condition of school and cost of upgrades.

SLIDE 5 – SUMMATION OF ARC

St. Francis ranked the lowest overall on the scoring rubric but it is interesting to note that we lost the greatest number of points in only 5 to 7 out of 44 total questions.

SLIDE 6 - EXCELLENCE

St. Francis has developed a reputation of academic excellence that supersedes the building.

SLIDE 7 – EQAO MATH RESULTS 2008

EQAO math results show that Niagara Catholic students surpass provincial results in testing. As you can see St. Francis students continue to achieve the highest results.

SLIDE 8 – EQAO LITERACY RESULTS 2008

Literacy test results also show outstanding scores from St. Francis students.

SLIDE 9 – CO-CURRICULAR

St. Francis offers a large variety of co-curricular activities as shown in our power point. We've highlighted just some of our accomplishments over the past year.

PAUSE

Year after year our students experience success and personal growth due not only to their hard work and determination, but also because of the guidance and dedication of our excellent staff and volunteers.

SLIDE 10 – PILGRIMAGE 2008

Every Fall St. Francis students walk in solidarity with Denis Morris and Holy Cross at a Pilgrimage aimed at raising awareness and funds for the poor in developing countries. Last year over 500 St. Francis students participated raising an amazing \$45,000.00. This year's theme was We've Got Soul and over 570 St. Francis students and community pulled together raising over \$56,000.00. It was overwhelming for us as parent volunteers to watch over 500 well behaved St. Francis students and staff fill half the Market Square and celebrate Mass together with fellow peers from Denis Morris and Holy Cross.

SLIDE 11 – CHRISTMAS OUTREACH

The Christmas gift drive annually gives our students the opportunity to serve others. Last year St. Francis collected gifts for community care and gift items for 75 bags and baskets that were distributed throughout our region.

SLIDE 12 - TESTIMONIALS

St. Francis is a community school, as you can see by some of the testimonials given.

PAUSE

SLIDE 13 – LETTERS TO THE EDITOR - TERRY

Perhaps you have read some of the letters to the editor in the St. Catharines Standard where members of our community have written in support of St Francis. Terry Rempel wrote “St. Francis has earned and maintained a widely known reputation for excellence.”

SLIDE 14 – LETTERS TO THE EDITOR - MIKE

Mike Bonomi echoes this when he wrote “It is a success in every sense of the word. St. Francis has established a very positive reputation and has achieved high standards both academically and athletically. You simply cannot duplicate or replace that. Instead, the school deserves to build on that success.”

SLIDE 15 – SAVE THE FUTURE OF ST. FRANCIS

Electronically, past and present students of St. Francis are reaching out through facebook. The site Save the Future of St. Francis is 160 members strong and the message is clear. I invite you to go online and read for yourself all the positive comments that past and present students have to say about their school.

SLIDE 16 – SENIOR STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

On December 2, 2008 Senior Staff presented their recommendations to the Niagara Catholic District school board for consideration. The parent community of St. Francis fully supports the recommendation that the Board maintain all 3 Catholic Secondary schools. It was also encouraging to read that the Senior staff recommends continuing to apply to the Ministry of Education for additional funding to provide facility plant upgrades to St. Francis. However, we are concerned with the proposed boundary review. If the St. Francis boundaries are minimized then specialized programs currently offered at St. Francis could be at risk. We ask that this point be taken into consideration.

SLIDE 17 – LONG LIVE ST. FRANCIS

In conclusion, Catholic education will continue to thrive in the Niagara Region only with the shared efforts of parents, students, staff and the school board. St. Francis Catholic Secondary School year after year provides an exceptional learning environment which educates its students academically, socially and spiritually. Declining enrollment is not an issue for us. In fact at our grade 8 open house it was literally standing room only. Our future parents and students showed us in overwhelming numbers that despite a black cloud of possible closure they were choosing us, and more importantly choosing Catholic education. We the parent community of St. Francis acknowledges the huge responsibility that you have been given in this decision making. We appreciate this time that you have given us to show you just some of the many reasons why St Francis along with Holy Cross and Denis Morris, is an essential component of Catholic Secondary Education in Niagara.
Thank you



ST. FRANCIS CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL

Home of the Phoenix

THE CASE FOR ST. FRANCIS

INTRODUCTION

Our school mascot the “Phoenix” is a beautiful, mythical bird. It is a symbol of the sun, rebirth, resurrection and immortality, this legendary red “fire bird” was believed to die in its self-made flames and out of the ashes a new Phoenix would rise.

ARC SCHOOL VALUATION

TOTAL RANKINGS FROM ARC REVIEW PROCESS

Total Rankings	
St. Francis	197
Holy Cross	230
Denis Morris	236

Source: St. Catharines Secondary Accommodation Review Committee - Generic School Valuation Template

OBSERVATION: St. Francis falls short, in comparison, by 33-36 points

ARC SCHOOL VALUATION

SO WHERE DOES ST. FRANCIS FALL SHORT

EVALUATION CRITERIA	ST. F	HC	DM
Adequacy of school's internal space to support student learning	2	8	10
Percentage of students in portables	6	10	8
Adequacy of cafeteria space	2	10	4
Condition of school	1	5	4
Cost of upgrades to the facility so that it can meet student learning objectives	1	5	4
Shortfall for St. Francis	28		
Shortfall for HC & DM		2	5

SUMMATION OF ARC

- ◉ St. Francis ranked the lowest on the scoring rubric.
- ◉ St. Francis lost the greatest number of points in only 5 questions out of a total of 44 questions.

EXCELLENCE

- ◉ St. Francis has developed a reputation of academic excellence that supersedes the building.

EQAO MATH RESULTS 2008

- Niagara Catholic students continue to surpass provincial results in testing
- St. Francis achieved **OUTSTANDING** results

GRADE 9 ASSESSMENT OF MATHEMATICS, 2007-2008

	St. Francis	Board	Province
ACADEMIC % of Students at Level 3-4	83%	77%	75%
APPLIED % of Students at Level 3-4	52%	29%	34%

Source: <http://www.eqao.com>

EQAO LITERACY RESULTS 2008

- St. Francis achieved OUTSTANDING results

ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL LITERACY RESULTS MARCH 2008

	St. Francis	Board	Province
All First Time Eligible Students	95%	87%	84%

Source: <http://www.eqao.com>

CO-CURRICULAR

- ◉ ALL of St. Francis' co-curricular is run by the staff
- ◉ St. Francis captured 5 zone championships and 4 SOSSA championships in 2007-2008
- ◉ In 2007-2008 St. Francis had 4 teams compete at OFSAA, including a team who has been a 3 year finalist
- ◉ St. Francis' rowing program captured 10 medals at the Canadian rowing championships
- ◉ St. Francis' ski club and badminton club have over 100 participants each
- ◉ Annual musical production

PILGRIMAGE 2008

- Over 570 St. Francis students participated in Pilgrimage
- Approximately 50 staff members and parents also participated
- St. Francis raised over \$56,000

CHRISTMAS OUTREACH

- St. Francis students donated and assembled 35 generous gift baskets last Christmas
- St. Francis students donated and assembled 40 small gift bags to RAFT last Christmas
- This Christmas we will continue our past efforts and the students will also donate gifts for young people (ages 13-20) to Community Care

TESTIMONIALS

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT ST. FRANCIS

- St. Francis is a gem of a school.
- Attending St. Francis is like getting a private education for free.
- Best kept secret in the city of St. Catharines.
- I would rather attend St. Francis than my current private school.
- I hear St. Francis has a great reputation.
- When I graduate from Teacher's College my goal is to teach at St. Francis.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

“Catholic education, especially St. Francis, is flourishing.”

Terry Rempel, The Standard, Monday June 23, 2008, pg A6

Terry states: “St. Francis has earned and maintained a widely known reputation for excellence.”

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

“Reward the success of St. Francis, don’t penalize it.”

Mike Bonomi, The Standard, Thursday June 19, 2008 pg A10

Mike states: “It is a success in every sense of the word. St. Francis has established a very positive reputation and has achieved high standards both academically and athletically. You simply cannot duplicate or replace that. Instead, the school deserves to build on that success”

SAVE THE FUTURE OF ST. FRANCIS

- ◉ Past and present students of St. Francis are reaching out through Facebook with a site entitled Save the Future of St. Francis.

SENIOR STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Senior Staff Recommendations

- 1. THAT, the Board maintains all three Catholic secondary schools in St. Catharines and monitor the accommodation and utilization of all three Catholic secondary school facilities over the next five years.
- 2. THAT, Senior Staff will continue to apply to the Ministry of Education for additional funding to provide facility plant upgrades to St. Francis Catholic Secondary School.
- 3. THAT, Catholic Secondary Schools in St. Catharines will continue to have the opportunity to implement specialized programs providing sufficient student enrolment and Ministry of Education funding and approval.
- 4. THAT, a St. Catharines Secondary Ad Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee be established to review the attendance boundaries for all three Catholic secondary schools in St. Catharines to maximize facility utilization of secondary schools in St. Catharines.

Source: December 2nd, 2008 Staff Report

LONG LIVE ST. FRANCIS



Building on St. Francis' Success in True Phoenix Spirit!