

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
BOARD MEETING  
APRIL 22, 2025**

***PUBLIC SESSION***

**TOPIC: UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE  
WHOLE MEETING OF APRIL 8, 2025**

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**RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** the Niagara Catholic District School Board receive the unapproved Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 8, 2025, as presented.

The following recommendations are being presented for the Board's consideration from the Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 8, 2025:

**7.1.1 St. Elizabeth Catholic Elementary School Chapel Naming Request**

**THAT** the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the request to name the Chapel at St. Elizabeth Catholic Elementary School, St. Carlo Acutis Chapel, as presented.

**7.1.2 Board and Committee Meeting Dates 2025-2026**

**THAT** the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Draft Board and Committee Meeting Dates Calendar 2025-2026, as presented.



# MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

## TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 2025

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee of the Whole of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, held on Tuesday, April 8, 2025 in the Father Kenneth Burns c.s.c. Board Room, at the Catholic Education Centre, 427 Rice Road, Welland.

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

### A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Opening Prayer

Opening Prayer was led by Trustee Di Lorenzo.

2. Roll Call

Vice-Chair Burkholder noted that Trustee Huibers asked to be excused.

Trustee	Present	Present Electronically	Absent	Excused
Natalia Benoit	✓			
Joseph Bruzzese	✓			
Rhianon Burkholder	✓			
Danny Di Lorenzo	✓			
Larry Huibers				✓
Doug Joyner	✓			
Jim Marino	✓			
Paul Turner	✓			
<b>Student Trustees</b>				
Emilio Geremia	✓			
Taylor Sexton	✓			

The following staff were in attendance:

**Camillo Cipriano**, Director of Education; **Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells**, **Gino Pizzoferrato**, **Pat Rocca**, **Domenic Massi**, **Joseph Zaroda**, Superintendents of Education; **Giancarlo Vetrone**, Superintendent of Business & Financial Services; **Julia Tiessen**, Executive Officer of Human Resources; **Anna Pisano**, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant, Corporate Services

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by Trustee Joyner

**THAT** the Committee of the Whole approve the Agenda of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 8, 2025, 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 March 4, 2025**

Moved by Trustee Marino

**THAT** the Committee of the Whole approve the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of March 4, 2025, 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 Joyner

**THAT** the Committee of the Whole adopt consent agenda items.

**CARRIED**

**B. PRESENTATIONS**

**C. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS**

**1. Niagara Catholic Behaviour and Communication Services Update 2025**

Gino Pizzoferrato, Superintendent of Education provided background information on Niagara Catholic's Behaviour and Communication Services and introduced Julia Nemcko, BCBA, Behaviour and Communication Services Lead.

Ms. Nemcko presented the Behaviour and Communication Services 2025 update.

Ms. Nemcko answered questions of Trustees.

2. **St. Elizabeth Catholic Elementary School Chapel Naming Request**

Director Cipriano presented the St. Elizabeth Catholic Elementary School Chapel Naming Request.

Director Cipriano answered questions of Trustees.

Moved by Trustee Bruzzese

**THAT** the Committee of the Whole recommend that the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the request to name the Chapel at St. Elizabeth Catholic Elementary School, St. Carlo Acutis Chapel, as presented.

**CARRIED**

3. **Draft Board and Committee Meeting Dates Calendar 2025-2026**

Director Cipriano presented the Draft Board and Committee Meeting Dates Calendar 2025-2026.

Moved by Trustee Marino

**THAT** the Committee of the Whole recommend that the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Draft Board and Committee Meeting Dates Calendar 2025-2026, as presented.

**CARRIED**

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

Joseph Zaroda, Superintendent of Education provided background information on the K-12 Experiential Learning and Technology program, and introduced 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 Success

Mr. Cristelli and Ms. Vella presented the K-12 Experiential Learning and Technology program highlights.

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

5. **Monthly Updates**

5.1 **Student Trustees' Update**

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

5.2 **Senior Staff Good News Update**

Senior Staff highlights included:

**Superintendent Pizzoferrato**

- Students in Niagara Catholic schools participated in the 27th annual *Kids Helping Kids* fundraiser in February. This event supports both the Niagara Children's Centre School and the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education, organizations that provide vital support to our students and families. Each school celebrates the campaign in its own creative way, with themed days like Silly Hat Day, Crazy Hair Day, Jersey Day,

PJ Day, and more. This year's campaign raised a total of \$38,508.56, with \$19,254.28 going to each organization.

## **D. GOVERNANCE POLICIES**

### **1. Governance Policies for Recommendation to the Board**

#### **2. Governance Policies Prior to Vetting**

##### **2.1. Occupational Health and Safety Policy (201.6)**

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

The Committee of the Whole suggested the following amendments:

- No amendment

The Committee of the Whole requested that the Occupational Health and Safety Policy (201.6), be vetted from April 9, 2025 to May 21, 2025 with a recommended deadline for presentation to the Committee of the Whole in June 2025, for consideration to the Board in June 2025.

##### **2.2. Employee Workplace Harassment Policy (201.7)**

Executive Office Tiessen, presented the Employee Workplace Harassment Policy (201.7).

The Committee of the Whole suggested the following amendments:

- No amendment

The Committee of the Whole requested that the Employee Workplace Harassment Policy (201.7), be vetted from April 9, 2025 to May 21, 2025 with a recommended deadline for presentation to the Committee of the Whole in June 2025, for consideration to the Board in June 2025.

##### **2.3. Employee Workplace Violence Policy (201.11)**

Executive Office Tiessen, presented the Employee Workplace Violence Policy (201.11).

The Committee of the Whole suggested the following amendments:

- No amendment

The Committee of the Whole requested that the Employee Workplace Violence Policy (201.11), be vetted from April 9, 2025 to May 21, 2025 with a recommended deadline for presentation to the Committee of the Whole in June 2025, for consideration to the Board in June 2025.

### **3. Governance Policy Review Schedule**

Vice-Chair Burkholder highlighted the Governance Policy Review Schedule.

## **E. INFORMATION**

### **1. Trustee Information**

#### **1.1 Essential Governance Training 2025**

Director Cipriano provided details the Essential Governance Training 2025.

## **F. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **1. General Discussion to Plan for Future Action**

- 1.1 Director Cipriano reminded Trustees of the Mid-Year report workshop on Tuesday, April 22, 2025 at 5:30 prior to the Board meeting.

## **G. BUSINESS IN CAMERA**

Moved by Trustee Bruzzese

**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 8:04 p.m. and reconvened at 8:10 p.m.

## **H. REPORT ON THE IN-CAMERA SESSION**

Moved by Trustee Bruzzese

**THAT** the Committee of the Whole report the motions from the In Camera Session of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 8, 2025.

**CARRIED**

### **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 March 4, 2025, as presented.

**CARRIED (Item G3)**

Labour negotiation update was provided.

## **I. ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Trustee Marino

**THAT** the April 8, 2025 Committee of the Whole Meeting be adjourned.

**CARRIED**

This meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

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Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Niagara Catholic District School Board held on **April 8, 2025.**

Approved on **May 13, 2025.**

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Rhianon Burkholder  
Vice-Chair of the Board

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Camillo Cipriano  
Director of Education/Secretary -Treasurer

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
BOARD MEETING  
APRIL 22, 2025**

***PUBLIC SESSION***

**TITLE: ST. ELIZABETH CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
CHAPEL NAMING REQUEST**

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**RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the request to name the Chapel at St. Elizabeth Catholic Elementary School, St. Carlo Acutis Chapel, as presented.

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Prepared by: Camillo Cipriano, Director of Education/Secretary-Treasurer  
Krista Olivieri, Board Chaplaincy Leader

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

Recommended by: Committee of the Whole

Date: April 22, 2025





## **REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE APRIL 8, 2025**

### **ST. ELIZABETH CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHAPEL NAMING REQUEST**

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#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The first meeting to organize separate schools in Wainfleet Township was called in 1952. At the time classes were held in the Church rectory, and in 1953 the first two-room frame structure officially registered as R.C.S.S. No 2 was created on First Concession Road. In 1953 the original school, known then as St. Malachy, was formally opened by Cardinal McGuigan of Toronto. There were 53 pupils enrolled and the school was staffed by two Sisters of Loretto. In 1957, it was decided that a new school would be needed very shortly and with a new name, St. Elizabeth Catholic Elementary School.

Three acres were purchased in 1958 and in 1959 a new two-room school was built on the site. In 1962, two more classrooms were added to the building, and again in 1965 an additional three classrooms and one general purpose room were added. A further extension was completed in 1967 when three classrooms, a library, a guidance center and a health room were built on to the school. The most recent addition and renovations, in 1979, included a spacious new gymnasium, complete with change rooms, stage and connecting kitchen, a beautiful library and a creative kindergarten area. This was the first electrically-heated school in Ontario. By the year 1968, there were 297 pupils enrolled, including two Kindergarten classes. In 1973, the first and only Junior Kindergarten in the township was opened. The people of Wainfleet had shown a very keen desire for Catholic Education and in 1965 purchased education rights for their children to attend Notre Dame College School in Welland. Today graduates attend Lakeshore Catholic High School in Port Colborne.

In September 2020, the Niagara Catholic District School Board received \$5,435,000.00 in funding from the provincial government to build a brand new St. Elizabeth Catholic Elementary School in the Township of Wainfleet as part of a joint venture with the DSNB. In March of 2023, Niagara Catholic broke ground to officially begin the start of the building of St. Elizabeth.

The process of the new building took approximately a year and a half. Niagara Catholic worked in close conjunction with the DSNB on this building to ensure that all of our needs as a Catholic board were met. This included a designated space for a school chapel for our staff, students and visitors to share and witness their Faith. It is a testament to the continued desire for Catholic Education in Wainfleet.

In accordance with Board Policy 100.15, Naming of a Board Facility, Designated Area or Chapel,

All Chapels in the Niagara Catholic District School Board will be named after the Blessed Trinity, or a name for Christ, or a mystery of his life already accepted in the liturgy, or the name of the Holy Spirit, or a name for the Blessed Virgin Mary, or a name of a holy angel, or the name of a Saint, or the name of a blessed provided the Bishop has given permission.

All requests will be presented to the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education for consideration. If supported by the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education, a recommendation will be made to the Director of Education for consideration.

The Director of Education will consult with the Bishop of the Diocese of St. Catharines for endorsement. If supported by the Director of Education and endorsed by the Bishop of the Diocese of St. Catharines, the Director will present the recommendation to the Board of Trustees for consideration. The Board of Trustees will approve the naming or renaming of a Chapel within a Board facility. The name of the Chapel within a Board facility will be displayed with an appropriate interior sign or lettering.

### **Recommendation**

A recommendation has been made by the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education, and Principal of St. Elizabeth Catholic Elementary School to the Director of Education to name the chapel at St. Elizabeth Catholic Elementary School St. Carlo Acutis Chapel. The Director of Education has consulted with the Bishop of the Diocese of St. Catharines and received Bishop Bergie's endorsement of the recommended name for the chapel.

Born on May 3rd, 1991, Carlo Acutis will be the first millennial saint when he is officially canonized by Pope Francis on April 27, 2025. Like other kids his age, Carlo had an avid interest in computer programming and video games and was also a devout Catholic who attended Mass daily. Combining these interests, as a young teenager Carlo designed a webpage highlighting the Eucharistic miracles that have occurred around the globe. Carlo died of leukemia in 2006, at the age of 15.

We are requesting the chapel at St. Elizabeth Catholic Elementary School be named St. Carlo Acutis Chapel to honour the faithful witness of our first millennial saint. The St. Carlo Acutis Chapel will be a space where students and staff of St. Elizabeth Catholic Elementary School can come to pray, reflect, and grow in their love of God as St. Carlo Acutis sought to do every day of his young life.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** the Committee of the Whole recommend that the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Naming Request – St. Carlo Acutis Chapel at St. Elizabeth Catholic Elementary School, Wainfleet, as presented.

Prepared by: Camillo Cipriano, Director of Education/Secretary-Treasurer  
Krista Olivieri, Board Chaplaincy Leader

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

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

Date: April 8, 2025

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
BOARD MEETING  
APRIL 22, 2025**

***PUBLIC SESSION***

**TITLE: BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETING DATES CALENDAR  
2025-2026**

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**RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Board and Committee Meeting Dates Calendar 2025-2026, as presented.

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Prepared by: Corporate Services

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

Recommended by: Committee of the Whole

Date: April 22, 2025



## REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MARCH 25, 2025

### BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETING DATES CALENDAR 2025-2026

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#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At the February 25, 2025 Board Meeting, the Board approved the 2025-2026 School Year Calendar for submission to the Ministry of Education. On March 5, 2025 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 2025-2026 is presented for the consideration of the Committee of the Whole (Appendix B).

When the Board approves the Board and Committee Meeting Dates Calendar 2025-2026, staff will place a copy on Board websites and notify Board Committees and staff.

Appendix A – Draft Board and Committee Meeting Dates Calendar 2025-2026

#### RECOMMENDATION

**THAT** the Committee of the Whole recommend that the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Draft Board and Committee Meeting Dates Calendar 2025-2026, as presented.

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Prepared By: Corporate Services  
Presented By: Camillo Cipriano, Director of Education/Secretary-Treasurer  
Recommended By: Camillo Cipriano, Director of Education/Secretary-Treasurer  
Date: April 9, 2024



# NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## 2025-2026 School Year Calendar & Meeting Dates

SEPTEMBER 2025						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3 SEAC	4 NCPIC	5	6
7	8	9 CW	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 AC SAL	18	19	20
21	22	23 BD	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

OCTOBER 2025						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 SEAC	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 CW	15 SAL	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 BD	29	30	31	

NOVEMBER 2025						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5 SEAC	6 NCPIC	7	8
9	10	11 CW	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 AC SAL	20	21	22
23 30	24	25 ORG BD	26	27	28	29

DECEMBER 2025						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3 SEAC	4	5	6
7	8	9 CW	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 BD	17 SAL	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Christmas	26	27
28	29	30	31			

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

FEBRUARY 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4 SEAC	5	6	7
8	9	10 CW	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 SAL	18 Ash Wednesday	19	20	21
22	23	24 BD	25	26	27	28

MARCH 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4 SEAC	5	6	7
8	9	10 CW	11 AC	12 NCPIC	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 BD	25 SAL	26	27	28
29	30	31				
HOLY WEEK						

APRIL 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2 Holy Thursday	3 Good Friday	4 Holy Saturday
HOLY WEEK						
5 Easter	6 Easter Monday	7	8 SEAC	9	10	11
12	13	14 CW	15 SAL	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 BD	29	30		

MAY 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6 SEAC	7 NCPIC	8	9
CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK MAY ?????						
10	11	12 CW	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 SAL	21	22	23
24 31	25	26 BD	27	28	29	30

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

JULY 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	

AUGUST 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 30	24 31	25	26	27	28	29

### 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
- \* Elementary Last Day of School June 25, 2026

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

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

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

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
BOARD MEETING  
APRIL 22, 2025**

***PUBLIC SESSION***

**TOPIC: APPROVED MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC) MEETING OF  
FEBRUARY 5, 2025 & MARCH 6, 2025**

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**RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** the Niagara Catholic District School Board receive the Approved Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of February 5, 2025 & March 6, 2025 as presented, for information.



# AGENDA AND MATERIAL



## SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, FEB 5, 2025

APPROVED

6:30 PM

Virtual Meeting in Compliance with Education Act Section 207 and Ontario Regulation 463/97 Section 5.1 (2)

### A. ROUTINE MATTERS

#### 1. Land Acknowledgement

*Introduction:*

*The Niagara Catholic District School Board wishes to honour the Indigenous people who have been the protectors of this land, known as Turtle Island, for more than ten thousand years.*

*We begin this meeting by acknowledging the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people.*

#### 2. Opening Prayer – Monique Somma

#### 3. Roll Call

Members	Affiliation	Yes	Excused
Somma, Monique	Community Living (Welland/Pelham) - CHAIR	X	
Cipriano, Madeline	Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region		X
Maxwell, Michelle	Niagara Children’s Centre	X	
Bowers, Christine	Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet)	X	
T.B.D.	Pathstone Mental Health		
Pede, Andrea	Down Syndrome Niagara	X	
Attree, Alexandria	Autism Ontario Niagara Region		X
Ecker-Flagg, Cindi Lee	Indigenous Representative	X	
Simmanivong-Elizarraras, Erica	Mainstream		X
Wilson, Alyson	Bethesda Services	X	
Donato, Krystine	Community Representative	X	
Burkholder, Rhianon	Trustee of the Board	X	
Marino, Jim	Trustee of the Board	X	
Cipriano, Camillo	Director of Education		X
Filice, Adele	Principal, Secondary		X
Walsh, Susy	Principal, Elementary	X	
Pizzoferrato, Gino	Superintendent of Education		X
Bishop, Kate	Student Representative	X	
Di Gioa, Jim	Coordinator of Student Support		X
Giancola, Danny	Coordinator of Student Support		X
Criddle, Anne Marie	Coordinator of Student Support	X	
Prohaszka, Ashley	Educational Assistant		x

4. **Approval of the Agenda** – Alyson Wilson approved – second by Cindi Lee Ecker-Flagg
5. **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**
6. **Approval of Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting of January 8, 2025.** - Trustee Marino approved - second by Alyson Wilson

**B. PRESENTATIONS**

**C. AGENDA ITEMS**

1. **Chair's Report** – Received another letter requesting SEAC to sign the letter regarding the same issues as discussed in January meeting. Committee has decided to use MACSE survey to collaborate and express the issues. Chair has added sections to the shared documents about supports, and other comments to speak about the shortage of Education Assistants recruitment and retention strategies. Information was also added regarding the successful happenings in Niagara Catholic. Gino will collaborate with his team and submit this by March. Next meeting a discussion can be had if we want to sign the letter.

Everyone should have received the Directors Performance Appraisal in January.

Niagara Catholic Education Award of Distinction meeting was February 4<sup>th</sup> and the winner will be announced on February 11<sup>th</sup> to the Board.

Welcome, Cindi Lee Ecker-Flagg is the Indigenous representative to SEAC. Still one spot open for community representation. If anyone knows of any other organization that would be a good fit we would like to invite them to join.

2. **Google Form for goals work** <https://forms.gle/y8nZeug8uG7Q9SKW8>
3. **SEAC Letter from Algoma District School Board** – conversation will be tabled until the next meeting.
4. **Co-Chair**

**D. AGENCY REPORTS**

**Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region** – Madeline

**Niagara Children's Centre** –Michelle  
No news to share

**Pathstone Mental Health** – vacant

**Down Syndrome Niagara** – Andrea  
AGM coming up February 21<sup>st</sup>. More information on World Down Syndrome day, March 21<sup>st</sup> more information to be shared at the next meeting.



**Bethesda Service** – Alyson

Planning to host Michael and Marcel to present on his first book in March. This event will be open to all community. March break activities will be posted on the website, individual and family events.

**Autism Ontario Niagara Region** – Alexandria

**Mainstream** – Erica

**Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet)** – Christine

No news to share

**Community Living (Welland/Pelham)** – Monique

Next week board members and coordinators meeting with the city to discuss inclusivity of summer program.

**E. STUDENT REPORT**

No report for this month.

**STUDENT SENATE REPRESENTATIVE**

**F. STAFF REPORTS**

**SECONDARY PRINCIPAL** –Adele

No report

**ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL** – Susy

This week all elementary schools hosting Open House and throughout the month of February there are many activities. Kids Helping Kids campaign supporting Niagara Children’s Centre.

**STUDENT SUPPORT DEPARTMENT** – Gino/Danny/Jim/Ann Marie

**Classroom Teachers**

Secondary ERTs and Special Education Class teachers gathered last month in a “Family of Schools” format to allow for time for elementary ERTs and secondary ERTs to meet and begin planning for September transitions. The session began with a virtual presentation from Student Support staff followed by in-person presentations and discussion led by Secondary staff regarding the Gr. 8 to Gr. 9 transitions for September 2025-2026.

**Kids Helping Kids**

The 27th Annual Kids Helping Kids fundraiser will run from Monday, February 10th to Friday, February 21st. Schools will participate in fun events such as Jersey Day, Hat Day and Creative Hair Day and funds raised will jointly support the Niagara Children’s Centre, and the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education.

**February Professional Activity Day**

On the upcoming February professional activity day, Student Support Facilitators will be facilitating virtual education sessions with Epilepsy Niagara and the Niagara Diabetes Centre for elementary and secondary educational assistants. These sessions will provide an overview of epilepsy and various types of diabetes, helping participants gain awareness of available resources and how to access them.

### **February Gifted module**

The next gifted module is S.T.R.E.A.M. focused. Students will work collaboratively to extend and strengthen their coding skills and understanding as they work to create a concept and execute programming instructions by coding Microbits. This module will continue to develop and foster students' innovative thinking and problem-solving skills, providing opportunities for unique project development.

### **“SNAP” (Supporting Neurodiversity through Adaptive Programming)**

Niagara Catholic participants from the Blessed Trinity, Lakeshore, Notre Dame College and Saint Francis Family of Schools enjoyed the Fall Session and the second half of our Niagara Catholic schools are looking forward to the Spring SNAP sessions offered through Brock University. The 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. Denis Morris, Holy Cross, Saint Michael and Saint Paul Family of Schools have had a chance to register with sessions beginning last week and continuing through to March.

### **TRUSTEE REPORTS - Trustee Rhianon Burkholder/Trustee Jim Marino**

Directors annual report is now on the Board website, it is a great review of the last year with Niagara Catholic.

Niagara Catholic made the top 200 employers and Niagara Catholic made the top school board out of all other school boards. More details are on the board website.

### **G. NCPIC REPORT**

### **H. NOTICES OF MOTION**

### **I. INFORMATION ITEMS**

Brock has event for students that would have disabilities transitioning there post-secondary. Open to high school students and information has been shared with secondary schools prior to Christmas.

### **J. MOMENT OF SILENCE / REFLECTION OF LIFE**

### **K. NEXT MEETING**

March 5<sup>th</sup> at Holy Cross Secondary School

### **L. ADJOURNMENT**



NIAGARA CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Approved

**INFORMATION SESSION OF THE  
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**MARCH 6, 2025**

The Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting, held on Thursday, March 6, 2025 at 6:30 p.m., at Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School, 460 Linwell Rd., St. Catharines, ON is recorded as an information session only as quorum was not in attendance.

Chair Monique Somma called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.

**A. ROUTINE MATTERS**

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

<b>Members</b>	<b>Affiliations</b>	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			
Christine Bowers	Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet)				X
Andrea Pede	Down Syndrome Niagara				X
Madeline Cipriano	Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara				X
Erica Simmanivong-Elizarraras	Mainstream				X
Michelle Maxwell	Niagara Children's Centre		X		
TBA	Pathstone		X		
<b>Community Representative</b>					
Krystine Donato					X
<b>Indigenous Representative</b>					
Cindi Lee Ecker-Flagg					X
<b>Secondary Student Senate Representative</b>					
Kate Bishop			X		
<b>Trustees</b>					
Trustee, Rhianon Burkholder		X			
Trustee, Jim Marino		X			

The following staff were in attendance:

**Gino Pizzoferrato**, Superintendent of Education, **Susy Walsh**, Elementary Principal, **Adele Filice**, Secondary Principal, and **Jenna Young**, Recording Secretary  
/Administrative Assistant.

Regrets received: Alyson Wilson

Guests/Staff Resources in attendance: Tayler Sergenese, Behaviour Analyst and Chris Tawil,  
Niagara Children's Centre

4. **Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by:

Seconded by: \_\_\_\_\_

**THAT** the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the  
Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of March 6, 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 February 5, 2025**

Moved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Seconded by: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**CARRIED**

**B. PRESENTATIONS**

1. After School Social Skills Development Program-*Tayler Sergenese*

Tayler Sergenese reported that:

- The After School Skill Development Program (ASSDP) funding has been used by the Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) team. The objective of the funding is to provide students across the system of all ages who possess diverse profiles with meaningful opportunities to participate in recreational/life skill activities. These programs are infused with Applied Behaviour Analysis components to increase social skills and promote independence.
- The NCDSB has received funding from the ministry for ASSDP since 2017, when Julia Nemcko first submitted the initial proposal. Since then, we have been able to run many programs over the years. We have an accumulation of funding due to Covid limiting the ability to provide groups, so we are running many more programs from Jan-July than ever before to utilize funding and optimize opportunities for as many students as possible.

- Both central level and school-based staff are involved. From the central level; the Behaviour and Communication Services Lead, Behaviour Analysts, and ABA Facilitators are supporting the program.
  - At a school-based level; the administration, Education Resource Teacher, Teachers, and Educational Assistants are supporting the program. Current programs include Exam Day Programming, Cooking, Coding, Superflex, Gardening, high school readiness, post high school readiness, arts and crafts club, and a summer social connections program. Future programs are continuing to be planned in order to utilize the funding and provide as many opportunities for these learners as possible this school year.
2. Tour of Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School-Special Education Classrooms-*Adele Filice*
- Principal Filice provided a tour of the new kitchen facilities.

### C. CHAIR'S REPORT-*Chair Somma*

1. **Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE)**

Chair Somma reported that MACSE is requesting school boards to provide feedback using the [MACSE Form](#) in order for MACSE to obtain targeted feedback on current issues, challenges and successful practices affecting the education sector and to help inform policy and program decisions. Completion of the form provides an opportunity for stakeholders in each of the constituencies represented on MACSE to communicate front-line observations, and suggestions. Input received from the various constituencies represented by an appointee at MACSE will be shared with applicable branches of the Ministry of Education and its Minister's Office and may be shared with other implicated ministries.

2. **SEAC Letter from Algoma District School Board**

Voting will carry over to the April 2, 2025 meeting.

3. **Future off-site meeting locations**

- April 2-
- May 7-
- June 4-

No future off-site meeting locations were forthcoming. Future meeting will be held at the Catholic Education Centre.

4. **Potential guest speakers/presentations for the remainder of this year and/or next year**

- Trustee Marino suggested-Gary Parker – Indigenous Lead, NCDSB as a further guest speaker.

### D. AGENCY REPORTS

1. **Autism Ontario Niagara Region- *Jessica Thomas***

Jessica reported that Autism Ontario Niagara Region still promoting *Celebrate the Spectrum* - trying to make it their most successful year yet! Please remind your school contacts to sign up and get involved. Any orders for flags, croc charms, bracelets, etc., must be submitted by March

19, 2025 to ensure they arrive in time for April 2, 2025-World Autism Day. A flyer has also been for Celebrate the Spectrum information.

Celebrate the Spectrum (CTS)-[Click here to place order](#).

Please take the time to watch and share our new video: [Autism Ontario: Making Autism Matter](#).

A memo will be distributed to all elementary and secondary principals/vice-principals to promote the *Celebrate the Spectrum* and World Autism Day.

**2. Bethesda Services-Alyson Wilson**

No report.

**3. Community Living (Pelham/Welland)-Chair Somma**

Chair Somma reported that Community Living is in the process of getting licensed for children's residential programming for individualized living. There is currently nothing like this in the Niagara region. The goal is to help transition young people that require support from youth housing into adult supported housing. The program will be geared towards teens ages 15-18 years old, focusing on teens who don't have a parental guardian and are in the system but not being properly supported because they have significant needs. The intention is to keep them in their familiar community instead of needing to relocate them to provide the required support.

**4. Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet)-Christine Bowers**

No report.

**5. Down Syndrome Niagara-Andrea Pede**

Andrea Pede shared that:

- The Down Syndrome Niagara's Annual Trivia Night will take place on Saturday, April 12, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., at the Merritton Community Centre. This annual event promises to be an unforgettable evening filled with brain-teasing questions, laughter, and friendly competition. There will be a silent auction, 50/50 draw, and many prizes to be won. Book a whole table or purchase individual tickets before they sell out!
- World Down Syndrome Day 2025 is coming up on Thursday, March 21, 2025. We call on all governments to...

***Improve Our Support Systems***

Individuals with Down syndrome, like everyone, need support to live fulfilling lives and engage in the community. Families also require assistance, as they often provide care for their loved ones with Down syndrome. This support is needed across schools, healthcare, extracurricular activities, and childcare. Although the type of support varies for each person, it is a basic human right. Everyone is entitled to support that respects their needs, offering choice, control, and dignity.

**• Elementary and Secondary School Resources**

In preparation for World Down Syndrome Day, the CDSS is reminding school administrators about their Education Hub, offering printable resources and quick guides with practical tips to support students. The WSDS website also offers free, downloadable resources, including a 'Theme Guide,' which is a great resource for secondary educators. It highlights the support systems that individuals with Down syndrome have and need as they navigate school, transition to adulthood, and build a life that meets their needs.

**6. Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara-Madeline Cipriano**

No report.

**7. Mainstream-Erica Simmanivong-Elizarraras**

No report.

**8. Niagara Children's Centre-Michelle Maxwell**

Chris Tawil on behalf of Michelle Maxwell reported that:

- Michelle Maxwell will no longer be the SBRS manager at NCC and her new replacement will be Kylee Daley, starting the first week of April.
- Julie McNamara was the manager of SBRS for PT and OT, however Chris Tawil will be taking over and will potentially be the new representative at the SEAC meetings.
- The extensive needs funding has been extended into 2026.

**E. COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE REPORT-Krystine Donato**

No report.

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

No report.

**G. SECONDARY STUDENT SENATE REPRESENTATIVE REPORT-Kate Bishop**

Kate Bishop reported that

- all schools participated in Kids Helping Kids Fundraiser during the month of February, as well as Pink Shirt Day to bring awareness to bullying and how it affects students and staff.
- World Down Syndrome Day will be celebrated in schools with Crazy Sock Day.
- Planning has begun for "Our Time to Shine" formal, which is a semi formal hosted for all of the Special Education students in Niagara Catholic.

**H. STAFF REPORTS**

**1. Elementary Principal-Susy Walsh**

No report.

**2. Secondary Principal-Adele Filice**

Principal Filice shared that, students were very active in the community by participating in SNAP and a bocce tournament, as well as going to see the Momentum Choir at the Performing Arts Centre.

**3. Student Support**

Anne Marie Criddle reported:

- **Bursary Application Opportunity: Community Living - Anne Stafford Light Up the Future**

The Anne Stafford Light Up the Future Bursary 2025 is open to all residents of Ontario aged 18 years and older who identify as having an intellectual disability. The goal of the bursary is to help recipients in their pursuit of an educational program or personal interest course or activity. The application process is currently open. Please contact Community Living Ontario: [bursary@communitylivingontario.ca](mailto:bursary@communitylivingontario.ca) or by telephone: 416-447-4348 ext. 235 for more information. Applications will be accepted until Friday, April 25th, 2025 at 5pm EDT.

- **Team Canada Para Hockey Game**

Hockey Canada will host a series of Para Hockey games featuring Canada vs. USA. Canada is the reigning World Champion from 2024, while the United States earned the silver medal. Para Hockey is a sport for individuals with lower limb disabilities, played in a seated position in a sled, and a part of the Winter Paralympic Games Program. This event not only highlights a different way to play Canada's game but also promotes awareness and appreciation for inclusivity and adaptive sports. Niagara Catholic schools have been invited to cheer on team Canada on Wednesday, March 26th at 12:00 p.m. at the Canada Games Park in St. Catharines. The spectator area is fully accessible.

- **World Autism Day**

April 2, 2025 is World Autism Day across Ontario. Celebrate the Spectrum is an opportunity for positive action to provide spaces of support and advocacy for our diverse communities. Autism Ontario is the province's largest collective voice representing the autism community, supporting thousands of families across the province. They provide information on autism, support autism research, implement programs and services for the autism community, and aim to support and advocate for all children, youth, and adults on the autism spectrum and their families across the province, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, religion, or gender identity. Visit [autismontario.com](http://autismontario.com) for more information and find out how to get involved to Celebrate the Spectrum on World Autism Day.

- **Upcoming Gifted Module**

Our Multi-Discipline and Program Resource Teachers are planning an exciting new module for April. The focus will be on Indigenous Education, where students will participate in a Medicine Walk and use their critical thinking skills to discuss the effects of human activity on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. These activities will be led by Louis Harris, a member of the Six Nations, a confederation of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora, and will be held at Heartland Forest.

- **HOOT Reading**

Hoot Reading has been purchased for those elementary schools who have principals also in the ERT role. In these specific schools, there was a need to address a Tier 3 reading intervention for junior students as Empower is only being delivered to primary students by the RIST. Student Support was able to support these schools with the purchase of Hoot Reading. Hoot Reading an online tutoring service providing 1:1, evidence-based literacy instruction with qualified teachers. Hoot Reading literacy tutoring programs are assessment-informed and intentionally designed to uncover specific areas where students are struggling. Every student's instructional pathway adapts throughout their tutoring program, directly targeting their unique skill gaps and moving them closer to reading proficiency.

We are still in the initial stages of determining the impact of these programs. In the next several weeks, we will be analyzing the data and collaborating with these principals to determine the impact of the program. This will assist Student Support to determine if Hoot Reading is a program that we will continue with next school year.



- Superintendent Pizzoferrato shared two opportunities coming up for stakeholder input, the first being the 2025-2026 Budget Survey and Feedback Consultation. The second input opportunity is in regards to choosing the names of two new schools being built in Niagara Falls and Beamsville. The Ad Hoc Committee has been formed for the Beamsville school naming, which will narrow down potential names to 3-5 options, presented on April 9, 2025. From there a system wide vote comprised of the St. John and St. Mark communities, including students, will take place. Chaplains will visit those two schools during Catholic Education Week and focus on teaching and informing students about the Saints being proposed as the new school names.

#### **I. TRUSTEE REPORTS-Trustee Burkholder/Trustee Marino**

Trustee Marino reported that:

- The Niagara Catholic District School Board recently announced the 2025 recipients of the Niagara Catholic Education Award of Distinction. This year's recipients to be added to Niagara Catholic's Wall of distinction are Former trustees and board chairs Kathy Burtnik and Frank Fera and former Director of Education John Crocco. Public nominations for the award opened last fall with an invitation to nominate a person or group. To be considered, recipients must have made a notable, significant, and positive contribution to Catholic Education. Perhaps some SEAC members around this table or those participating on line may know an individual or group deserving of the award and may want to consider putting a name or names forward this fall when the time comes for the 2026 award nominations. Suggestions could include priests, nuns, religious brothers, lay-people individuals or groups, volunteers, builders, and other significant contributors to the Niagara Catholic Education system. The winners will receive their awards at the Niagara Foundation for Catholic education's Annual Benefit gala with honorary guest Bishop Gerard Bergie on Thursday, March 27 at Club Roma.
- The Niagara Catholic Indigenous Lead Gary Parker and members of the Niagara Catholic Indigenous Team provided an excellent presentation at the March 4, 2025 Committee of the Whole Meeting. The team spoke of the programs offered by Niagara Catholic in support of Indigenous students, and how the Board was addressing the education of these students in a plan that is supported by the Ministry of Education. The Board Indigenous Team reaches out, partners, and shares with the Region's Native Centres and other regional groups to gather necessary and relevant information that will complement their regular classroom curriculum. Special emphasis is placed on reaching out to communicate with the students, listen to their voices, understand what they are saying, find out their needs, all in their best interest of students. Indigenous students not only attend traditional Niagara Catholic schools, but also have the opportunity to explore their culture through land-based learning. Information relating to Indigenous student programs is available in all of our schools and I encourage you to take the opportunity to "take a look" when you get the chance. I left the meeting with a feeling that programs offered to Niagara Catholic's Indigenous students are second to none, and will help to lead the way in establishing a blue print for Indigenous students of future generations.
- Each year, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association holds a short video competition. For the second year in a row, St. Mary Catholic Elementary School in Niagara Falls took first place for elementary schools and for Secondary Schools, Notre Dame College School in Welland placed second. The two-minute videos were in keeping with this year's Jubilee Year theme, Pilgrims of Hope.

## J. NIAGARA CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Superintendent Pizzoferrato on behalf of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee shared:

### 1. *Association for Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE)*

Niagara Catholic is pleased to announce that Jennifer Pilzecker has been approved as the Niagara Catholic OAPCE Regional Director. Jennifer will act the OAPCE liaison between the Board, the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee and Catholic School Councils of the Board.

Niagara Catholic is pleased to support the OAPCE 86<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Saturday, May 24, 2025 at Saint Michael Catholic High School. All parents/guardians are invited to attend. This is an incredible opportunity to connect with Catholic parent leaders, educators, and community members as we explore important topics in education, faith, and advocacy. Further details will be forthcoming.

### 2. *Serra Club of St. Catharines Promoting Catholic Vocation*

Serra Club of St. Catharines Promoting Catholic Vocation is hosting a Murder Mystery Dinner.

Saturday, May 3, 2025 Club Roma

Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

Event begins at 6:30 p.m.

\$65.00 per person-includes: one drink ticket, dinner and the murder mystery

Maximum of 8 per table

Tickets may be purchased through e-transfer at [events@serrastc.ca](mailto:events@serrastc.ca)

For more information, please contact Deedee Alexandre at 905.732.4782

### 3. *School Mental Health Ontario (SMH-ON)*

School Mental Health Ontario (SMH-ON): [\*By Your Side\*](#) Parent/Caregiver resources to support mental health learning and well-being for every family.

***By Your Side Parent/ Caregiver Learning Hub*** is an online resource centre designed to meet the needs of Ontario's families. Resources and supports are made available in multiple formats—including web content, PDFs, videos and webinars to ensure families can access information and strategies that promote mental health and well-being at home.

#### **Key topics in the Parent/Caregiver Learning Hub include:**

- understanding mental health
- promoting mental health at home
- supporting mental health at school
- stress and anxiety management
- substance use prevention
- navigating digital technology use
- reaching out for help

These resources aim to support mental health and well-being by providing accessible, research-informed, culturally responsive supports tailored to a wide-range of learning preferences. Further resources will be added over time, in response to parent identified needs.

**K. NEW BUSINESS/AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

No new business or agenda items for future meetings were forthcoming.

**L. NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday, April 2, 2025 at 6:30 p.m., at the Catholic Education Centre

**M. CLOSING PRAYER:** Chair Somma led the closing prayer.

**N. ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by:

Seconded by: \_\_\_\_\_

**THAT** the March 6, 2025 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee be adjourned.

**CARRIED**

This meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

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