

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 28, 2025**

PUBLIC SESSION

**TOPIC: UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE MEETING OF DATE OCTOBER 14, 2025 AND
CONSIDERING OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board receive the unapproved Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of October 14, 2025, as presented.

The following recommendations are being presented for the Board's consideration from the Committee of the Whole Meeting of October 14, 2025:

7.1.1 Math Achievement Action Plan 2025-2026

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board endorse the Niagara Catholic District School Board Math Achievement Action Plan 2025-2026, as presented.

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 28, 2025**

PUBLIC SESSION

TITLE: MATH ACHIEVEMENT ACTION PLAN 2025-2026

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board endorse the Niagara Catholic District School Board Math Achievement Action Plan 2025-2026

Prepared by: Kim Kinney – Superintendent of Education, Board Math Lead

Presented by: Kim Kinney – Superintendent of Education, Board Math Lead

Recommended by: Committee of the Whole

Date: October 28, 2025



REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OCTOBER 14, 2025

MATH ACHIEVEMENT ACTION PLAN 2025-2026

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Ministry of Education launched Ontario's Math Achievement Action Plan during the 2023-2024 school year to support student achievement and results in math across the province. The ministry brought together experts in mathematics education to better understand next steps for math improvement in Ontario. Through this work, the ministry developed *Taking Action in Mathematics* (Appendix A), an iterative framework to capture areas of focus and guide improvement actions.

Math Achievement Action Plan

All school boards are required to have dedicated Board Math Leads. Board Math Leads, working at the Supervisory Officer level, are expected to plan, implement, monitor, and report progress towards math achievement and improvement targets as well as lead board-wide actions to meet these targets.

School boards have also been funded for dedicated School Math Facilitators to work in Grades 3,6, and 9 classrooms in identified Priority Schools. The role of School Math Facilitators is to work in Priority Schools to support mathematics academic achievement efforts in alignment with the school and board improvement goals and actions, provide in-class facilitation to strengthen math knowledge and pedagogy, collaborate with educators, and share resources and effective practices.

The Ministry identified priority elementary and secondary schools based on an analysis of 2021-2022 EQAO mathematics achievement data. The priority schools across the province included over 1250 schools that achieved at the lowest 20% of schools in the 21-22 EQAO assessment. Based upon this data, Niagara Catholic had 10 priority schools at the primary level and 10 schools at the junior level. Of these schools, three schools were identified at both the primary and junior level. For the 2024-2025 school year the Ministry approved some changes to the Priority Schools in response to some improvement at the individual schools and identified areas of need at others. The Board continues to directly support those Priority Schools initially selected and the additional schools. Currently, there are no secondary schools identified as priority schools.

Informed by the ministry's *Taking Action in Mathematics* framework, the Board Math Lead, along with the Math Facilitators developed a board Math Achievement Action Plan, which included three sections:

- All schools report to provide board-wide improvement efforts and results in mathematics
- Priority Schools report to provide intensive improvement efforts
- Priority Schools Provincial KPI (Key Performance Indicators) report to provide intentional monitoring of student achievement KPI's common to all priority schools across the province.

The Math Achievement Action Plan outlines the board's concrete, visible, and measurable strategies as well as key performance indicators at the board, school, and classroom level under the four areas of focus:

1. Curriculum Fidelity
2. Math Content Knowledge for Teaching
3. Knowing Your Student
4. Measurable Results: Improvements in Math Achievement

The Math Achievement Action Plan is to be endorsed by the Director and trustees of the board and will be submitted to the ministry under the following timelines:

November 14, 2025 (Initial): Initial strategies and KPI's
 March 27, 2026 (Progress): Incorporate data from Term 1/Semester 1
 July 17, 2026 (Final): Incorporate data from Term 2/Semester 2

The Board Math Lead will continue to provide updates on progress of the Math Achievement Action Plan to the ministry Math Action Team through regular meetings. The Board Math Lead will also communicate updates and progress to the Board and the Niagara Catholic community.

Niagara Catholic District School Board Math Achievement Action Plan 2025-2026

Goals: All schools will see an increase in student achievement as measured through Classroom assessment data, Report Card data and EQAO data.

Staff survey information will show an increase in teacher understanding of math content knowledge for teaching.

There will be an increase in the percentage of students whose individual attendance rate is equal to or greater than 90 percent.

There will be an increase in the percentage of Grade 3,6, and 9 students who report positive results regarding math attitudes and confidence.

	Ensuring fidelity of curriculum implementation	Engaging in ongoing learning on mathematics content knowledge for teaching	Knowing the mathematics learner, and ensuring mathematical tasks, interventions and supports are relevant and responsive
Areas of Need	Better awareness and understanding of the High Impact Instructional Practices – how they look in the classroom at different stages of the learning process i.e., beginning of the learning process, mid-way, deep in the learning process. An understanding of the math curriculum expectations and how the expectations develop both	For educators to understand the difference between and importance of the domains of mathematical knowledge for teaching, and specifically developing their Specialized Content Knowledge and Knowledge of	Using a range of effective assessment practices to learn about the mathematical strengths and needs of all students and using assessment data to inform instructional decisions that are responsive to students.

	within a grade level/course and across grade levels/courses.	Content and Students.	
Board Strategies	Prioritize understanding of the curriculum and the continuum of learning across grades. Leverage digital math resources to support curriculum-linked practice at home. *Provide guidelines, resources and supports for mathematics curriculum, aligned long range plans, unit plans, and lesson plans through Niagara Catholic created Scope and Sequence.	Utilize student achievement data and student work to establish focus areas for mathematics professional learning.	Provide digital math tools to support student mathematics learning at home and/or at school, that can be used by teachers to understand current student learning levels and provide targeted supports for students.
School Strategies	Engage in ongoing professional learning (e.g., in grade/division/department meetings, learning teams, classroom visits) on the curriculum, including making connections across strands. *Support the use of Scope and Sequence through board networks and targeted Program visits with school staff.	Engage in regular collaborative meetings (e.g., team teaching, collaborative analysis of student work, school and/or board networks, classroom visits) to deepen knowledge of mathematics, curriculum, instructional starting points, and interventions.	Integrate common open and parallel learning tasks across grades/divisions that foster student ownership of mathematics, while ensuring all students have accessible entry points into learning.
Classroom Strategies	Connect instruction and assessment to curriculum expectations and long-term essential mathematical understandings using developmental continuums, through the use of Niagara Catholic Scope and Sequence.*	Access resources (e.g., teacher supports on the Curriculum and Resources website), experts (e.g., curriculum consultants, school math facilitator) and professional learning to continuously develop content knowledge for teaching.	Adapt lesson planning in response to data collected from multiple, frequent assessment opportunities) e.g., interviews, conversations, student agendas, exit tickets, portfolios, surveys.)

Measurable Results: Improvements in Math Achievement through KPI's	Teacher survey – built on gauging their understanding of curriculum grade expectations and the high impact practices. Monitor intentional usage of digital math tool and core resource Monitor and collect data – student achievement- from the math team and their work in the system Usage data provided from Digital Math Tool Math UP Leadership Auditing Tools % of students who progressed in their level of achievement on math report cards	Math Up Leadership Cycle – Multiplicative Reasoning Math UP common task data Educator surveys – content knowledge of mathematics	Knowledgehook usage and data Math UP common task analysis and survey audit % of students whose individual attendance rate is equal to or greater than 90% % of Grades 3,6, and 9 students who report positive results regarding math attitudes and confidence
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The * indicates updated Board, School and Classroom strategies for the Math Achievement Action Plan 2025-2026.

Implementation of the Math Achievement Action Plan

In continuing to implement the Math Achievement Action Plan for 2025-2026, the Program and Innovation team will build upon successful organizational structures from the previous year. Staff survey results from 2024-2025 indicated increased understanding of and increased confidence working with the Math Curriculum 2020. Data obtained through the digital math tool – Knowledgehook – showed significant increased use by students both at school and at home. Increased student proficiency across strands was also recorded. Parent satisfaction with Knowledgehook was high. Math results from EQAO 2024-2025 at Grades 3, 6, and 9 have not yet been released from EQAO. Upon release of the EQAO data, further review of the data will contribute to the evaluation of the Math Achievement Action Plan.

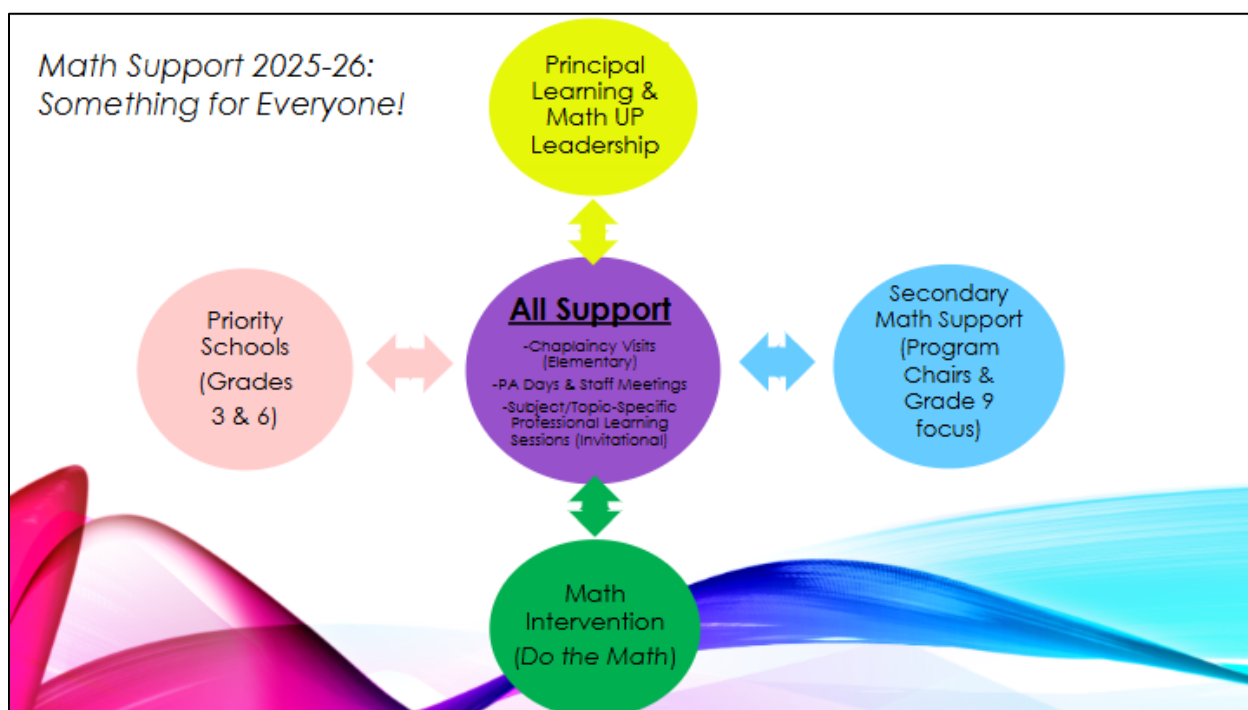
For the 2025-2026 school year, the strategies and actions identified in the plan build upon the work of the previous two years. Direct support to teachers at Priority Schools will continue with the specific aim of building educator capacity. Targeted work continues to be a focus at the Principal level with all school Principals working directly with the Board Math Lead with a focus on instructional leadership within the schools.

Niagara Catholic District School Board continues to be committed to ensuring high quality instruction for all students from K-12 and therefore believes that support should be provided to all schools, and not only Priority Schools. A cohesive, aligned plan will continue to see all schools receiving intentional support

while Priority Schools will receive targeted support based upon their identified areas of need and strategies from their individual school math achievement action plans.

The visual below highlights the Math Achievement Action Plan. While the Math Achievement Action Plan is grounded in the work and learning that happens at the school level for both staff and students, with collaboration with Program and Innovation staff, learning must also occur for School Principals and Senior Administration to achieve coherence. Throughout the year School Principals and Senior Administration (Academic) will also be engaged in mathematics learning for leaders.

All schools at the elementary level will continue to receive direct support through Chaplaincy visits to work with Program and Innovation staff to address Board identified and school identified needs and strategies. These support visits happen throughout the year and have built in monitoring and data collection as well as addressing curriculum content and content knowledge for teaching. Identified Priority schools will receive additional time and support that is more targeted and individualized for their specific needs. Math Intervention will be provided for small groups of primary and/or junior students at identified schools to close gaps and support students' understanding of foundational concepts that are critical to accessing grade level curriculum.



All schools will create, implement, monitor, and report to their individual School Math Achievement Action Plan. A newly Niagara Catholic created tool has been shared with Principals to facilitate easier documentation of their school improvement work. The Student Achievement Plan tool will include the school's Math Achievement Action Plan.

The Math Achievement Action Plan is iterative and as such, data obtained through monitoring will be reflected and shared in the plan. The plan will be shared with the board of trustees throughout the 2025-2026 school year.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommends that the Niagara Catholic District School Board endorse the Niagara Catholic District School Board Math Achievement Action Plan 2025-2026

Prepared by: Kim Kinney, Superintendent of Education, Board Math Lead

Presented by: Kim Kinney, Superintendent of Education, Board Math Lead

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

Date: October 14, 2025

Taking action in mathematics | Look-fors by provincial action

Math achievement efforts across the province should include multiple proven evidence-informed strategies and approaches to address local learning needs in schools.

The ministry has worked with researchers, math specialists, and school boards to identify three interwoven math actions to be prioritized in the 2023–24 school year. Board Math Leads, as they determine board and school priorities in mathematics achievement, will develop, implement, and monitor a Math Achievement Action Plan that includes meaningful and measurable key performance indicators (KPIs) aligned with each of the priority actions below.

A mathematics community of excellence: In order to promote effective math instruction, it is important for educators to foster mathematics communities in classrooms and schools, and to recognize that not all students learn math in the same way or within the same time frames. Effective math instruction is supported by an inclusive, positive, and safe learning environment where all students feel valued and engaged, and in which educators clearly communicate expectations and establish norms and routines with their students at the beginning of instruction. Educators at all levels of the school system have a role to play in establishing a culture of excellence in mathematics and setting conditions for success. This includes leaders reviewing practices to determine barriers to success, creating accountability, and attending to mathematics attitudes and mindsets in school and system improvement plans.

PRIORITY ACTION: Ensuring fidelity of curriculum implementation and use of instructional and assessment practices with a proven track record of enhancing student achievement	PRIORITY ACTION: Engaging in ongoing learning to strengthen mathematics content knowledge for teaching	PRIORITY ACTION: Knowing the mathematics learner, and ensuring mathematical tasks, interventions and supports are relevant and responsive
- How are all educators throughout the system focused on developing a comprehensive understanding and precise implementation of the mathematics curriculum? - How do grade, course, and daily lesson plans reflect the current curriculum, including the mathematical processes and connections between curriculum strands?	- What systems, supports, and resources are available to support teachers and leaders in determining a focus area for their math content knowledge development? - How are all educators engaged in ongoing learning that strengthens their own mathematics knowledge, skills, and attitudes about math teaching and learning?	- How is student assessment data and prior mathematics knowledge used to guide interventions and planning? - How do educators learn about the mathematics strengths, needs and interests of all students to inform their instructional decisions? - How are educators supporting inclusion and engagement for all students, especially those with diverse learning needs?
Board - Prioritize understanding of the curriculum and the continuum of learning across grades - Align resources, including staffing, with mathematics priorities - Provide guidelines, resources and supports for mathematics curriculum-aligned long-range plans, unit plans, and lesson plans - Leverage digital math resources to support curriculum-linked practice at home	Board - Utilize student achievement data and student work to establish focus areas for mathematics professional learning - Understand the importance of the relationship between mathematics content knowledge and effective mathematics instruction, as it relates to student achievement - Prioritize mathematics content knowledge for teaching in professional learning opportunities and in allocation of resources, including staffing	Board - Align Math Improvement Action Plan with board improvement planning, including using student assessment and demographic data to identify areas of focus - Build capacity in data analysis resources to understand mathematics achievement from a variety of sources, including alignment between EQAO, report cards, and locally-developed assessment tools/tasks - Provide a digital math tool to support student mathematics learning at home and/or at school, that can be used by teachers to understand current student learning levels and provide targeted supports for students - Develop a system-wide attendance strategy for students with more than 10 days of absences as part of board's existing prolonged absence strategy

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 28, 2025**

PUBLIC SESSION

TITLE: LONG TERM PROJECTIONS 2025-2035

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Ministry of Education Long term projections, as presented.

Prepared by: Giancarlo Vetrone, Superintendent of Business & Financial Services
Alexsandria Pasquini-Smith, Administrator of Planning & Properties
Watson and Associates Economists Ltd

Presented by: Giancarlo Vetrone, Superintendent of Business and Financial Services

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

Date: October 28, 2025



REPORT TO THE BOARD OCTOBER 28, 2025

LONG TERM PROJECTIONS 2025-2035

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Long-Term Planning and Pupil Place Projections

As part of the Capital Priorities submissions, the Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) is required to develop a 10-Year Long-Term Projection Plan for each municipality within its jurisdiction. This report outlines pupil place projections for the planning horizon from 2025–26 to 2034–35. As local municipalities continue to update their long-range planning documents and implement provincial directives through policy and localized initiatives, these pupil place projections will be revised accordingly. This ensures that the long-term needs of the NCDSB remain aligned with evolving municipal and provincial frameworks.

It is important to recognize that the NCDSB encompasses a large and diverse geographic area, where growth and demographic changes do not occur uniformly. The projections and growth assumptions presented in this report are consistent with the ongoing 2025 Education Development Charges (EDC) Background Study and incorporate municipally approved forecasts, including Development Charges Background Studies, Official Plans, and Regional allocations.

While the projections may indicate available capacity within specific Review Areas, this approach does not fully capture localized areas of enrolment pressure or reflect the vast geographic diversity of the Board. The On-The-Ground (OTG) capacity referenced in this summary is based on 2025–26 School Level Validation Data (SLVD) for constructed and operational school facilities.

Maximum Portable Count Assessment

To determine the maximum number of portables each site can accommodate, the NCDSB conducted a site-by-site assessment based on current conditions. It is important to note that this was a high-level desktop exercise and is subject to several limitations. The maximum portable counts provided are based on best estimates and available physical land at each site. These estimates do not include detailed analyses of washroom capacity, Ontario Building Code (OBC) requirements, parking impacts, or site-specific constraints such as grading, development applications, or electrical infrastructure upgrades. For the purpose of this assessment, a capacity of 23 pupils per portable was used to estimate overall accommodation potential.

Appendix A – Ministry of Education Submission Long-Term Planning and Pupil Place Projections

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Ministry of Education Long Term Projections, as presented.

Prepared by: Giancarlo Vetrone, Superintendent of Business & Financial Services
Alexandria Pasquini-Smith, Administrator of Planning & Properties
Watson and Associates Economists Ltd

Presented by: Giancarlo Vetrone, Superintendent of Business and Financial Services

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

Date: October 28, 2025



Long Term Projections

School Board NameNiagara Catholic DSB

Trustee approval date

School Board #50

Senior School Board Officials			
Name	Position	Contact Information	Date
Camillo Cipriano	Director of Education	905-735-0240 ext 220	
Giancarlo Vetrone	Superintendent of Business and Financial Services	905-735-0240 ext 232	

The Ministry of Education recognizes the importance of working together with its partners, including school boards and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to meet the government’s commitment to helping build modern schools faster to support the needs of growing communities, to better utilize school capacity, and ensure value for taxpayer dollars. School boards and their local planning authorities are expected to collaborate to facilitate early and integrated planning for school facilities to meet current and future needs.

Using the excel template below, boards are asked to provide details of their long term enrolment projections linked to the Ontario Housing Action Plan and related municipal growth plans. Elementary and secondary school information will be inserted in separate tabs. Please see the [Program Guidelines](#) for further details regarding this template.

Boards are permitted to submit supplementary documents, such as, maps and long-term capital plans.

Included below is a snapshot of pupil place projections for the 2025-26 to 2034-35 planning horizon. As local municipalities update their respective long-range planning documents and operationalized Provincial directives through policy and localized initiatives, pupil place projections will be updated and the long-term needs of the Niagara Catholic District School Board adjusted accordingly. In addition to this consideration, the Niagara Catholic District School Board represents a sizeable district where changes and growth are not occurring uniformly. It should also be noted that the projections and growth assumptions align with the 2025 EDC Background Study and reference local area municipally approved forecasts (including Development Charges Background Studies, Official Plans and Regional allocations). While the pupil place projections may illustrate available capacity within a Review Area, this approach to identifying long-term growth needs does not highlight or recognize the isolated areas of pressure and/or the vast geography of the board. The OTG capacity contained within this summary is reflective of 2025/26 SLVD data for constructed and operating school facilities.

Maximum Portable Count

In determining the maximum portable count, Niagara Catholic took a site-by-site approach to determine how many portables a site can accommodate in current conditions. Please note, that this is a high-level desktop exercise and has various limitations. Maximum portable counts are based on our best estimates and physical land availability. These estimates do not include a formal detailed analysis of washroom implications, OBC requirements, parking implications, or site-specific limitations (grading, development applications, power upgrades etc.). A capacity of 23 pupils per portable was determined in determining capacity.



School boards and their local planning authorities are expected to collaborate to facilitate early and integrated planning for school facilities to meet current and future needs. Please include available links and supporting documentation in your submission or using the space below.

Elementary

Municipality	School Board Planning Area	# of newly constructed dwelling units over the forecast period	Total OTG Capacity of Area (Current + Approved)	Max portables	Total area capacity with max portables	**Submission Priority	Review Area Pupil Place Projections (ADE) by School Year									
							2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
	St. Catharines	6,230	4,391	69	5,978	1	3,786	3,862	3,936	4,019	4,119	4,146	4,166	4,226	4,250	4,295
	Niagara Falls North	1,589	1,795	30	2,485		1,667	1,754	1,847	1,915	1,958	2,004	2,038	2,035	2,042	2,052
	Niagara Falls South	6,504	2,410	42	3,376		2,394	2,503	2,604	2,698	2,784	2,868	2,951	3,042	3,098	3,150
	NOTL	1,533	307	6	445		274	279	288	297	301	309	312	321	328	339
	Fort Erie	2,542	1,234	27	1,855		936	975	1,005	1,053	1,088	1,102	1,147	1,189	1,186	1,199
	Welland and Port Colborne East	1,876	1,117	18	1,531		745	769	797	801	818	836	827	840	840	848
	Welland and Port Colborne West	4,428	1,986	26	2,584		2,002	2,124	2,215	2,300	2,413	2,489	2,584	2,668	2,713	2,768
	Wainfleet	152	187	2	233		98	101	101	105	105	108	112	113	116	117
	West Lincoln	3,125	495	6	633		533	554	568	576	586	601	621	641	668	709
	Pelham and Thorold	5,148	1,284	18	1,698		1,565	1,660	1,758	1,852	1,928	2,001	2,071	2,122	2,152	2,172
	Grimsby and Lincoln	4,924	2,251	31	2,964		1,886	1,920	1,934	1,974	1,976	2,034	2,097	2,151	2,209	2,294
		38,052	17,457	275	23,782	1	15,885	16,501	17,052	17,589	18,077	18,500	18,926	19,348	19,601	19,943

Secondary

Municipality	School Board Planning area	# of newly constructed dwelling units over the	Total OTG Capacity of Area (Existing +	Max portables	Total area capacity with	**Submission Priority	Review Area Pupil Place Projections (ADE) by School Year									
							2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
	St. Catharines, NOTL, Part Lincoln	7,763	2,585	22	3,091	2	2,345	2,360	2,422	2,485	2,565	2,661	2,771	2,851	2,955	2,988
	Pelham, Thorold, Niagara Falls, Welland	17,840	2,946	23	3,475		3,400	3,516	3,620	3,671	3,823	4,020	4,185	4,299	4,470	4,568
	Lincoln, West Lincoln, Grimsby	8,049	1,088	6	1,226		1,119	1,133	1,172	1,198	1,223	1,263	1,255	1,282	1,264	1,244
	Wainfleet, Port Colborne, Fort Erie	4,399	1,122	6	1,260		693	673	721	715	734	773	767	779	854	933
		38,052	7,741	57	9,052	2	7,558	7,681	7,935	8,070	8,345	8,716	8,977	9,211	9,542	9,732

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 28, 2025**

PUBLIC SESSION

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

RECOMMENDATION

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



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

September 3, 2025

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, held on Wednesday, September 3, 2025 at 6:30 p.m., at the Catholic Education Centre, 427 Rice Road, Welland, ON L3C 7C1

Chair Monique Somma called the meeting to order at 6: 41 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	Autism Ontario Niagara Region		X		
Alyson Wilson	Bethesda Services	X			
Monique Somma (CHAIR)	Community Living (Pelham/Welland)	X			
Sara Wencel & DJ Holmes	Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet)	X			
Andrea Pede	Down Syndrome Niagara	X			
Madeline Cipriano	Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara				X
Erica Simmanivong-Elizarraras	Mainstream				X
Chris Tawil	Niagara Children's Centre		X		
Michelle Toy	Pathstone	X			
Community Representative					
Krystine Donato			X		
Indigenous Representative					
Cindi Lee Ecker-Flagg					X
Secondary Student Senate Representative					
TBD					
Trustees					
Trustee, Rhianon Burkholder		X			
Trustee, Jim Marino		X			

The following staff were in attendance:

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

Guests/Staff Resources in attendance: Roxanne Rees, Nicole Royer, James Di Gioia, Grace Brochu, Ashley Prohaszka, Brittany Wiken, Susy Walsh, Ann Marie Criddle, Vince Mancuso

4. **Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by: Alyson Wilson

Seconded by: Andrea Pede

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the agenda of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of September 3, 2025 as presented.

CARRIED

5. **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

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

6. **Approval of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes of June 4, 2025**

Moved by: Trustee Burkholder

Seconded by: Trustee Marino

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of June 4, 2025 as presented.

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATIONS

1. Gino Pizzoferrato, Superintendent of Education – SEAC Regulations

Superintendent Pizzoferrato presented:

SEAC regulations from the Ministry website, discussing the different roles/representation that make up the committee and the rights and responsibilities associated with being a member. Each school board and school authority must establish a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). These committees are made up of elected school board trustees and representatives from local associations with an interest in special education.

A committee:

- Provides important advice on special education to their local board or school authority
- Makes recommendations to their board or authority on anything that impacts the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services

This page is a convenient source of information about the [Special Education Advisory Committee Regulations](#)

2. Student Support Coordinators – Pathways to Our Full Potential

James Di Gioia presented:

An update on the Student Support symposium held at White Oaks Conference Resort and Spa in Niagara on the Lake on May 28th, 2025. The conference consisted of presentations from community partners and educational stakeholders, highlighting the importance of developing partnerships and communication with agencies who work with families to provide students with the framework for future success when they leave the school system. A slideshow titled “Pathways to Our Full Potential” was then shown exploring the formula used when laying the groundwork to walk with students from kindergarten to grade 12, helping them reach their full potential in mind, body and spirit.

C. CHAIR’S REPORT-*Chair Somma*

Chair Somma presented:

1. Goals – Monique to discuss with Gino and bring to the October meeting
2. Future off-site meetings
3. Potential guest speakers/presentations

Next steps- new/continued goals for 2025/26 school year. Please contribute if you have not done so:



4. Agency updates for school newsletters – Please contribute if you have not done so by updating your information and/or creating a form for your organization:



D. AGENCY REPORTS

1. Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – Madeline Cipriano

No report.

2. Niagara Children's Centre – Chris Tawil

Chris Tawil reported:

- **CEO Retirement:**
The current CEO is retiring on September 30, 2025. A replacement has not yet been announced but it is expected soon.
- **Programs and Groups:**
Summer and Fall groups have been running, including:
 - Recreational therapy programs
 - Physiotherapy groups starting in October
 - OT-led PD day groups focusing on activities of daily living for children
- **Superhero Run Fundraiser, October 4:**
Features and inclusive 1K run with 12 stations for all children. Also includes 2.5K and 5K runs.
- **New Support Group:**
A new Male Caregiver Support Group has launched and is doing well.
- **New Contract/Program:**
 - The organization has received part of the contract for the Inclusion Resource Model
 - Will bring in more resource consultants, focusing on preschool-age children and school transitions
- **School Collaboration:**
 - Working with school boards to roll out Tier One consents to support all students
 - Therapists have begun school visits and early collaboration has gone smoothly
- **Health and Safety Planning:**
 - Developing clear safety procedures for therapists in schools
 - Includes participation in emergency drills and protocols for school-based situations

3. Pathstone Mental Health – Michelle Toy

Michelle Toy reported:

- As of September 1, Pathstone's Crisis and Support Line has new hours:
Monday-Thursday: 8:30 AM – 7:30 PM
Friday: 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

- Resources are being reallocated to clinics and expanding other services.
- Data showed the line is mostly used during the day, with less use on evenings and weekends.
- Alternative crisis supports available after hours:
Kids Help Phone
Distress Centre
211 and 811

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

Sara Wencel reported:

- **Summer Camp Recap:**
 - Provided 1:1 support to 17 children across four community camps: YMAC, Safari Niagara, Icanter, a local camp in Welland
 - Received a grant to allow siblings to attend camp, benefiting 7 families and providing relief for parents
- **Current Programs:**
After school activities are now up and running with registrations underway

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

Andrea Pede reported:

- **Holy Cross Grade 9 Welcome BBQ**

Down Syndrome Niagara was one of the agencies to attend this event and be present for families looking for community resources or general information. It was great to connect with these fellow agencies and we look forward to attending again next year. Special thank you to Mrs. Sparkman who coordinated the agencies and provided us the opportunity to share what we do for our members and the Niagara community.

Pathways to Success

On Thursday, September 25th, 2025, from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm at Pen Centre, Down Syndrome Niagara will be at the event along with representatives from social service agencies throughout the Niagara Region to provide information about our organization to those in the community.

- **Caregiver Conversations by the Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS)**

In recognition of National Caregiver Awareness Month, CDSS introduced a new [four-part video series](#) highlighting caregivers in the Down syndrome community. Each episode shares a unique journey, including personal triumphs, lessons learned, and advice on advocacy.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Down Syndrome Niagara's Annual Friendship Walk**

When: Sunday, September 21st, 2025

Time: 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Location: Grantham Lion's Club in St. Catharine's

*** Raffle, face painting, magician, food, music ***

DSAO Conference

When: Friday October 17th and Saturday October 18th, 2025

Location: The Jolly Rogers Inn, Parry Sound, ON

Halloween Party – Saturday, October

Christmas Party – Sunday, December

Additional Guides and Resources:

- [Education Resources](#)
- [21 Welcomes: A Guide for New Parents](#)

6. Mainstream - Erica Simmanivong-Elizarraras

No report.

7. Bethesda Services – Alyson Wilson

Alyson Wilson reported:

Bethesda offers a variety of different **Foundational Family Services and Supports** that are available to families registered with the Ontario Autism Program or Children's Behaviour Services. Our latest Service Guide can be found on our website -

<https://bethesdaservices.com/en/youth/home>. All of the services are free and immediately available to families! Services include:

- Caregiver and Youth Workshops
- Social Recreational Groups
- Clinical Group Services
- Family Activities and Community Events
- Family and Sibling Support Groups
- Brief Consultation Services (SLP, OT, ABA and Mental Health Services)

Bethesda provided over 77 summer camps and fun family activities to over 635 children, youth and families this summer.

The team at Bethesda appreciated the opportunity to join Niagara Catholic to help facilitate three full day **Transition to Grade 1** Summer camps in July and August. The team at Niagara

Catholic developed thoughtful and engaging clinical curriculum that provided opportunities for students to practice skills and routines to support a successful transition to Grade 1 in September.

Bethesda and the Niagara Children's Centre hosted graduation ceremonies in August for 90 children across five Entry to School (ETS) classrooms. Schools received Integrated Transition Reports for the students who are transitioning into Kindergarten in September. The ETS Program also includes consultations to families and educators to help support the child's transition to school throughout the first term. Educators can request consultations by emailing entrytoschool@bethesdaservices.com. A new group of 18 children will be starting the Fall Entry to School classroom in September. The program will run out of Bethesda's Niagara Family Centre through to the end of January when children will transition to kindergarten for the start of the second semester.

Brock Bethesda Applied Behaviour Analysis PhD Collaboration – Bethesda's Foundation is supporting the collaboration with Brock University again this year. Clinical Supervisors from Bethesda will be working closely with Brock professors and PhD students to offer families free service related to Sleep, Toileting and At-Risk Behaviour.

Transition to Adulthood Workshop Series (in person at Bethesda)

Part 1: Navigating the Transition to Adulthood Tuesday, September 16, 2025 | 6:00pm-8:30pm

Learn about the Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) process of transitioning to adulthood in the community and at Bethesda. This foundational session sets the tone for the remaining workshops!

Part 2: Community Supports & Goal Setting Tuesday, September 23, 2025 | 6:00pm-8:30pm

Do you know for which services your youth is eligible? Find out in this session! We will provide you with the resources you will need to begin customizing your plan and setting goals for your youth's future, with the help of Developmental Services Ontario (DSO).

Part 3: Engaging Youth in the Transition Process Tuesday, October 7, 2025 | 6:00pm-8:30pm

Hear from young adults about their real-life transition experiences. Learn tips on goal setting, advocacy, and self-determination. *Youth are encouraged to attend this session with their parent/caregiver.*

Part 4: Introduction to Adult Services at Bethesda Tuesday, October 14, 2025 | 6:00pm-8:30pm

Discover Bethesda's adult services, including Passport funding, day/respite programs, healthcare changes, and guardianship/consent. Learn how to access services as your youth approaches adulthood.

Register at Serviceinfo@bethesdaservices.com or 905.684.6918 ext. 170
<https://portal.bethesdaservices.com/event-6300618>

8. Autism Ontario Niagara Region – Jessica Thomas

Jessica Thomas reported:

1. 25th Anniversary of Summer Camps

- Celebrated 25 years of summer camps in Niagara
- Each week featured different groups of children and unique themed activities
- Very successful and well-attended
- First-time collaboration with Niagara Catholic to co-facilitate a Transition to Grade One group during summer camp, which ran over three separate weeks. Staff from Bethesda were highly impressed with the professionalism, structure and clinical oversights of the program and found it to be a valuable learning experience, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to partner with Niagara Catholic.

2. Upcoming Workshops & Events (All Online)

September 16 – Understanding Special Education

- 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM
- For caregivers of autistic learners. Covers IEPs, IPRCs, school supports, and education system navigation

September 17 – Paperwork Party

- Help families filling out the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACDS) application

September 18 – Navigating a New Diagnosis

- For caregivers of newly diagnosed children over age 5
- Covers support networks, financial aid, and access to services

September 18 - Awesome Moms Group

- Monthly peer support group for mothers

September 23 – Exploring Autism

- Covers sensory environments, support strategies, transitions and practical tips

September 24 – Journey Through Special Education

- With 3 guest speakers: Curriculum Consultant & Parent Advocate, Special Education Coordinator & Parent Advocate, SEAC Program Leader

September 29 - Journey to Adulthood (Evening session at 6:30 PM)

- Focus on transitions: employment, education, community involvement

September 29 – RAD Dads

- Monthly support group for fathers or male caregivers of autistic children

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

Monique Somma reported:

Tutoring Program with the library:

- Funding secured to continue the program two days a week
- Notices have to go out to Welland schools and parents (may already be full)

Program Expansion:

- One of the days will include non-academic skill building activities

E. COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE REPORT-Krystine Donato

No report.

F. INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATIVE REPORT-Cindi Lee Ecker-Flagg

No report.

G. SECONDARY STUDENT SENATE REPRESENTATIVE REPORT- TBD

No report.

H. STAFF REPORTS

1. Elementary Principal – Susy Walsh

Susy Walsh reported:

- Alignment Across Grades: Many transition activities for kindergarten students mirrored those used for Grade 9, showing consistency in welcoming practices.
- Transition Activities for Kindergarten (Year 1): This was continued from last year and extended through the summer, and included:
 - “All About Me” surveys completed by parents
 - Personalized transition books
 - Mock kindergarten days before school started
 - Students dropped off belongings
 - Tried a “day in the life” of kindergarten
 - Rode the bus
 - Practiced routines
- Ongoing Support in September: Focus on building routines, understanding student needs, and strengthening relationships with families and supporting agencies.
- Appreciation for Community Partners: Thanked all supporting agencies for their work over the summer, which eases the transition for students and supports educators.

2. Secondary Principal – Roxanne Rees

Roxanne Rees reported:

Notre Dame Secondary School – Transition Activities Update

- Proactive Transition Planning: Transition efforts begin in early second semester (April). Staff (special education, resource, and student success teachers) meet with feeder schools to start planning.
- New This Year: Grade 8 Transition Day: Incoming Grade 9 students from all feeder schools spent a full day at Notre Dame. Activities included:
 - Cooking – taught health and safety skills

- Phys Ed – class simulation in the gym
- Meeting future classmates and teachers – to ease September transition
- Received Notre Dame spirit wear shirts
- Benefits Observed: Helped students feel less overwhelmed and promoted community inclusion (older students recognize and engage with special education students by name) and generated excitement and familiarity with the school
- Grade 9 Orientation (August 26): Students and parents were given school tours, and had the opportunity to meet teachers and classmates, creating a smoother start for new students in September.
- Future Planning – The transition day was a success and will be repeated annually, with the possibility of expanding efforts to start transition activities as early as Grade 7.

3. Secondary Principal – Nicole Royer

Nicole Royer reported:

- Grade 9 Transition: Held a Grade 9 BBQ in August. Spring transition visits were ongoing, with incoming students often visiting with EAs and/or parents. Late-year visits with parents helped students feel more comfortable.
- Inclusive Breakfast Program: Run out of the special education classroom, this program was open to all students, creating a natural opportunity for daily interaction and community building. A variety of breakfast items such as bagels, grilled cheese, yogurt, etc. were offered to encourage participation.
- Staff Experience and Commitment: Emphasis on the importance of smooth transitions and minimizing disruption by prioritizing planning, communication, and student comfort. The focus is on safety, inclusivity and support for students of all abilities.

4. Student Support – Ann Marie Criddle

Ann Marie Criddle reported:

Spring LDANR Transition Programs

In late spring 2025, and in Partnership with the Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region (LDANR), transition programs were held for students in Niagara Catholic. 28 students from grades 7 and 8 participated from the elementary panel and 9 students from grades 11 and 12.

Summer ABA Programs

38 elementary students participated in our ABA Summer Program which provided students and families with an opportunity to better prepare for kindergarten year 1. The ABA team and staff involved provided programming strategies rooted in Applied Behaviour Analysis to prepare students for successful school entry.

Summer Speech/Language Assessments

10 Speech-Language assessments were prioritized from our wait list and were completed during the months of July and August by our Board Speech and Language Pathologists, which helped to address the current assessment waitlist.

Student Support August Transition Team

Through additional Ministry Funding, the Student Support implemented a transition team for the period of Aug. 25th - Aug. 29th which involved 15 members from the department who supported students, families, teachers, and administrators with students new to school or returning to school this September. The focus was on liaising with community partners, preparing visual schedules, transition meetings, environmental assessments, reviewing safety plans and much more. We thank the staff who were involved in this program and wish all students the best of luck in their new beginning.

Empower

Niagara Catholic elementary schools are scheduled to deliver Empower reading to targeted students again this school year. Refresher training for experienced staff will occur on September 10th while training for new staff will occur on September 11th and 12th. Staff will soon begin to determine the best candidates for the program.

Our first Student Support Session for ERT and Special Education Classroom Teachers

will be held Sept. 16 where staff will gather in-person here at the CEC. A full agenda is planned that includes presentations from some of our community partners such as Niagara Children's Centre – School Based Rehabilitation Services and Brock University SNAP Program.

5. Superintendent Pizzoferrato – Gino Pizzoferrato

No report.

I. TRUSTEE REPORTS - Trustee Burkholder/Trustee Marino

Trustee Burkholder reported:

- Attended graduations and witnessed many successful student transitions.
- Informed the committee that Paul Calandra is now the Minister of Education and he has suggested eliminating school trustees, which the Ontario Trustee Association is actively opposing.

Trustee Marino reported:

- Everyone is encouraged to visit the OCSTA website to read the statement from the association regarding the proposed removal of trustees in Ontario.
- Noted other provinces have attempted similar actions but were unsuccessful.

J. NIAGARA CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

No report.

K. SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING

A motion was put forth by Chair Somma to amend the agenda by removing section K – Special Education Funding

Moved by: Trustee Burkholder

Seconded by: Andrea Pede

THAT the agenda be amended by removing section K – Special Education Funding.

CARRIED

L. NEW BUSINESS/AGENDA ITEMS

No report.

M. NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, October 1, 2025 at 6:30 p.m., at The Catholic Education Centre.

N. CLOSING PRAYER/MOMENT OF SILENCE: Chair Somma led a moment of silence.

O. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Trustee Burkholder

Seconded by: Alyson Wilson

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

CARRIED

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