



*We are a Christ-centered Catholic faith community
that celebrates diversity and fosters spiritual growth,
inspiring all to reach their full potential in mind, body and spirit.*

AGENDA AND MATERIAL

BOARD MEETING

**TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2024
6:30 P.M.**



PUBLIC ACCESS LIVE STREAM LINK
<https://niagaracatholic.ca/meetings-livestream/>

FATHER KENNETH BURNS, C.S.C. BOARD ROOM, CATHOLIC EDUCATION CENTRE, WELLAND, ONTARIO

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

- | | | |
|-----|---|--------|
| 1. | Land Acknowledgement | - |
| 2. | Opening Prayer – Trustee Joyner | - |
| 3. | Roll Call | - |
| 4. | Approval of the Agenda | - |
| 5. | Declaration of Conflict of Interest | - |
| 6. | Minutes of the Board Meeting of February 27, 2024 | A6 |
| 7. | <u>Consent Agenda Items</u> | |
| 7.1 | Unapproved Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of March 5, 2024
and Consideration of Recommendations | A7.1 |
| | 7.1.1 Student Transportation Policy (500.2) | A7.1.1 |
| | 7.1.2 Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Policy (800.7) | A7.1.2 |
| | 7.1.3 Code of Conduct Policy (302.6.2) | A7.1.3 |
| | 7.1.4 Interim Math Achievement Action Plan | A7.1.4 |
| 7.2 | In-Camera Agenda Items F1, F2 & F3 | - |

B. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|----|
| 1. | FACS Niagara LemonAID Day | B1 |
|----|---------------------------|----|

C. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

- | | | |
|----|---|----|
| 1. | System Priorities – Action Plan Mid-Year Update | C1 |
|----|---|----|

D. TRUSTEE ITEMS, OPEN QUESTION PERIOD & OTHER BUSINESS

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 1. | Correspondence | - |
| | 1.1 Letter from Ombudsman Ontario | D1.1 |
| 2. | Report on Trustee Conferences Attended | - |
| 3. | General Discussion to Plan for Future Action | - |

- 4. Trustee Information
 - 4.1 Calendar of Events – April 2024 D4.1
- 5. Open Question Period
(The purpose of the Open Question Period is to allow members of the Catholic school supporting public to ask about items on that night's public agenda or any previous agendas, and the Board to answer and react.)

E. NOTICES OF MOTION

- 1. Notice of Motion Submission -
- 2. Notice of Motion Presentation -

F. BUSINESS IN CAMERA

G. REPORT ON IN CAMERA SESSION

H. FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

I. MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION FOR LIFE

J. ADJOURNMENT

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
MARCH 19, 2024**

PUBLIC SESSION

**TITLE: MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING OF
FEBRUARY 27, 2024**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Minutes of the Special Board Meeting of February 27, 2024, as presented.



MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024

Minutes of the Meeting of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, held on Tuesday, February 27, 2024, 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 Chair Di Lorenzo. Trustee Joyner acted as Vice-Chair.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Land Acknowledgement

Land Acknowledgement statement was delivered by Trustee Joyner.

2. Opening Prayer

Opening Prayers were led by Trustee Di Lorenzo

3. Roll Call

Chair Di Lorenzo noted that Trustee Benoit, Trustee Huibers, Student Trustees Johnstone and Geremia are excused and Trustee Burkholder joined electronically.

Trustee	Present	Present Electronically	Absent	Excused
Natalia Benoit				✓
Joseph Bruzzese	✓			
Rhianon Burkholder		✓		
Danny Di Lorenzo	✓			
Larry Huibers				✓
Doug Joyner	✓			
Jim Marino	✓			
Paul Turner	✓			
Student Trustees				
Charlotte Johnstone				✓
Emilio Geremia				✓

The following staff were in attendance:

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

4. **Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by Trustee Marino
Seconded by Trustee Joyner

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Agenda of the Board Meeting of February 27, 2024, as presented.

CARRIED

5. **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

No Declaration of Conflict of Interest were declared with any items on the Agenda.

6. **Approval of Minutes of the Board Meeting**

6.1 **January 30, 2024**

Moved by Trustee Bruzzese
Seconded by Trustee Joyner

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting of January 30, 2024, as presented.

CARRIED

6.2 **February 13, 2024**

Moved by Trustee Bruzzese
Seconded by Trustee Joyner

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting of February 13, 2024, as presented.

CARRIED

7. **Consent Agenda Items**

7.1 **Unapproved Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of February 16, 2024 and Consideration of Recommendations**

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board receive the unapproved Minutes of the Committee of the Whole of February 16, 2024, as presented.

7.1.1 **Elementary and Secondary School Year Calendars**

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Elementary and Secondary School Year Calendars for the 2024-2025 school year, as presented.

7.1.2 **Employee Hospitality Policy (201.14)**

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Employee Hospitality Policy (201.14), as presented.

7.1.3 Attendance Area Review – Blessed Trinity Catholic Elementary & Secondary Family of Schools

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve Attendance Area Option B-2 for the Blessed Trinity Catholic Elementary and Secondary Family of Schools as the preferred boundary option. The updated boundaries will commence upon the opening of the New Lincoln (Beamsville) Catholic Elementary School. The attendance boundaries will be revised to:

- **New Lincoln (Beamsville) CES:**
 - East: Commencing on the intersection of the centreline of Tufford Road and King St, north to Tufford Road and Lake Ontario.
 - North: Lake Ontario and Tufford Road, west to Mountainview Road.
 - West: Following Mountainview Road and Lake Ontario, south along Mountainview Road to the intersection of Mountainview Road and King Street.
 - South: Centreline of King Street between Mountainview Road (west) and Tufford Road (east).

- **Our Lady of Fatima CES (Grimsby):**
 - East: Commencing on Baker Road North (excluding) and its projection to the QEW to Kerman Avenue and its projection (excluding) to
 - South: Main Street
 - West: the Regional Municipality Boundary (Niagara and Hamilton - Wentworth) to
 - North: Lake Ontario to the point of commencement on Baker Road North

- **St Mark CES (Lincoln, Beamsville):**
 - East: Commencing on Tufford Road (centerline) to King Street to Cave Springs Road and its projection to
 - South: the Fly Road to Mud Street E
 - West: Mountain Road to Elm Tree Road E to Church Road to Ridge Road (including)
 - North: Ridge Road E to King Street

- **St Edward CES (Lincoln, Jordan Station):**
 - East: Commencing on the Fifteen Mile Creek to the QEW to Hwy 406 to First Street Louth (excluding) to
 - South: Pelham Road to the Town Boundary (Lincoln and Pelham and Lincoln and West Lincoln) to
 - West: the Town Boundary (Lincoln and West Lincoln) to Fly Road to Spiece Road to Cave Springs Road and its projection (excluding) to King Street (excluding) to Tufford Road (centerline) to
 - North: Lake Ontario to the point of commencement on the Fifteen Mile Creek
 - Note: Secondary School placement for St. Edward School - west of Fifteen Mile Creek and Victoria Avenue is Blessed Trinity Catholic Secondary School and east of the same line is Denis Morris Catholic High School

- **St Joseph CES (Grimsby):**
 - East: Commencing on Baker Road North to Central Avenue to Baker Road North and its projection (excluding) to Elm Tree Road E west to Mountain Rd to Mud Street

- South: Mud Street (Town Boundary - Grimsby and West Lincoln) to
- West: the Regional Municipality Boundary (Niagara and Hamilton - Wentworth) to
- North: Main Street West to Kerman Avenue and its projection to the QEW to the point of commencement on Baker Road North
- **St Martin CES (West Lincoln, Smithville):**
 - East: Commencing on Moote Road (excluding) to Fifteen Road (excluding) to Rosedene Road (excluding) to Vaughan Road (excluding) to Regional Road 27 (excluding) to Baldwin Road and its projection (excluding) to
 - South: the Welland River to the Township Boundary (West Lincoln and Wainfleet) to the Regional Municipality Boundary (Niagara and Haldimand - Norfolk) to
 - West: the Regional Municipality Boundary (Niagara and Hamilton - Wentworth) to
 - North: the Township Boundary (West Lincoln and Grimsby and West Lincoln and Lincoln to the point of commencement on Moote Road
- **St. John CES (Lincoln, Beamsville):**
 - East: Commencing on Mountainview Road (centerline) to King Street
 - South: Ridge Road E to King Street
 - West: Baker Road and its projection to Central Avenue (excluding) to Baker Road North (excluding) to
 - North: Lake Ontario to the point of commencement on Tufford Road

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the report detailing the boundary and legacy recommendations from the Attendance Area Review.

7.2 Approved Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Meeting of January 10, 2024

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board receive the Approved Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of January 10, 2024, as presented.

7.3 In-Camera Items F1, F2 & F3

Moved by Trustee Bruzzese
Seconded by Trustee Marino

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board adopt the consent agenda items.
CARRIED

B. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

C. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

1. Niagara Catholic 2023 Student Census Report

Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells, Superintendent of Education, presented the Niagara Catholic 2023 Student Census Report for trustee information.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells answered questions of Trustees.

2. 2024-2029 Long Term Accommodation Plan

Clark Euale, Controller of Facilities Services provided background information on the Long Term Accommodation Plan and introduced Alessandria Pasquini-Smith, Administrator of Planning & Properties and Jack Ammendolia, Managing Partner, Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Mr. Ammendolia presented the 2024-2029 Long Term Accommodation Plan.

Mr. Ammendolia answered questions of Trustees.

Moved by Trustee Marino

Seconded by Trustee Bruzzese

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the 2024-2029 Long Term Accommodation Plan, as presented.

CARRIED

3. Communications Update – Website Progress

Director Cipriano provided background information on the Website Progress and introduced Jennifer Pellegrini, Communications Officer.

Ms. Pellegrini presented the Communications Update – Website Progress report for trustee information.

Ms. Pellegrini answered questions of Trustees.

D. TRUSTEE ITEMS, OPEN QUESTION PERIOD & OTHER BUSINESS

1. Correspondence

Nil

2. Report on Trustee Conferences Attended

Nil Report

3. General Discussion to Plan for Future Action

Director Cipriano reminded Trustees of the Skills Competition Award presentation at Seaway Mall on Thursday, February 29, 2024 at 9:00 am.

Director Cipriano noted that the Trustee Lenten Retreat will take place on Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 4:00 pm at Denis Morris Catholic High School. Trustees were asked to confirm their attendance with Anna Pisano.

4. Trustee Information

4.1 Calendar of Events – March 2024

Director Cipriano highlighted the March 2024 calendar of events.

5. Open Question Period

None Submitted

E. NOTICES OF MOTION

1. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMISSION

None Submitted

2. NOTICE OF MOTION PRESENTATION

None Presented

F. BUSINESS IN CAMERA

Addressed within consent agenda section.

G. REPORT ON THE IN-CAMERA SESSION

H. FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Chair Di Lorenzo reminded Trustees of the Committee of the Whole meeting on March 5, 2024 and the Board meeting on March 19, 2024.

I. MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION FOR LIFE

J. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Marino

Seconded by Trustee Joyner

THAT the February 27, 2024 meeting of the Niagara Catholic District School Board be adjourned.

CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Niagara Catholic District School Board held on **February 27, 2024**.

Approved on **March 19, 2024**.

Danny Di Lorenzo
Chair of the Board

Camillo Cipriano
Director of Education/Secretary -Treasurer

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
MARCH 19, 2024**

PUBLIC SESSION

TITLE: FACS NIAGARA LEMONAID DAY

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board proclaim Saturday June 8, 2024 Mountainview LemonAID Day for FACS Niagara.

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

Presented by: FACS Niagara

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

Date: March 19, 2024



The 3rd Annual Mountainview LemonAID Day for FACS Niagara is happening June 8, 2024!

Mountainview LemonAID Day is about "Kids Helping Kids"!

Family and Children's Services Niagara is excited to inform you that the 3rd Annual Mountainview LemonAID Day is taking place Saturday, June 8, 2024 around the entire Niagara Region. Once again, we are working with Mountainview Building Group to encourage community members to raise money to send kids to camp this summer by hosting a lemonade stand.

We are very proud to say that in 2023 the event raised over \$100,000, providing over 500 weeks of summer camp for deserving kids in the care of FACS Niagara.

We are respectfully asking that the Niagara Catholic District School Board proclaim Saturday June 8th, 2024 Mountainview LemonAID Day for FACS Niagara.

What is Mountainview LemonAID Day?

It's a fun, family day that gives children and families the opportunity to give back to their community by selling lemonade and fundraising from family and friends.

Mountainview LemonAID Day is accessible to anyone! Registered teams receive everything they need to be successful including a branded lemonade stand, lemonade concentrate, pitchers, cups, t-shirts and hats. All they need to bring is a table and big smiles!

When participants register through our website, they will automatically set up their own fundraising page so that they can begin accepting online donations. We challenge our young do-gooders to raise at least \$250 to send one kid to camp!

We have prizes for the team that raises the most, and the teams with the best decorated stands throughout each community.

Thank you for supporting FACS Niagara through Mountainview LemonAID Day and helping us send Niagara kids to camp this summer!

Sincerely yours,

Caroline Polgrabia
President, FACS Niagara Foundation



**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
MARCH 19, 2024**

PUBLIC SESSION

**TITLE: NIAGARA CATHOLIC STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS ACTION
PLAN MID-YEAR ACHIEVEMENT REPORT 2023-2024**

The Niagara Catholic Strategic Directions Action Plan Mid-Year Achievement Report
2023-2024 is presented for information.

Prepared by: Senior Administrative Council

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

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

Date: March 19, 2024



NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

REPORT TO THE BOARD MARCH 19, 2024

NIAGARA CATHOLIC STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS ACTION PLAN MID-YEAR ACHIEVEMENT REPORT 2023-2024

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At the November 23, 2021 meeting of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the following motion was approved;

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Vision, Mission, Values Statements and Strategic Directions for the school years 2021-2022 until 2025-2026 (Appendix A)

The Niagara Catholic Strategic Directions are designed to provide the annual focus for the system towards achieving the outcomes of the Niagara Catholic Multi-Year Strategic Plan (2021-2026). Within the five (5) Strategic Directions, fifteen (15) specific priorities/goals were identified and approved and provide the specific framework to measure the achievement of each direction and strategy within our multi-year strategic plan.

The Board approved MYSP – Strategic Directions were posted on the Niagara Catholic website and copies were provided to Bishop Bergie, the Diocese of St. Catharines, Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), Catholic School Council Chairs and the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (NCPIC).

As we have reached the approximate mid-point of the 2023-2024 academic year, Senior Administrative Council conducted its annual mid-year review of the progress in achieving the priorities within the Action Plan. The results of the mid-year review were collated and reviewed by Senior Administrative Council, administrators and Board staff as a measurement of our success to date in achieving each Strategic Direction by the conclusion of the academic year.

Attached to this report (Appendix B) is a copy of the Niagara Catholic System Priorities and Action Plan Mid-Year Achievement Review 2023-2024, outlining the progress to date. Within each priority/goal are the actions, work plan, measures of success, responsibility and progress to date.

At the conclusion of the 2023-2024 school year, members of Senior Administrative Council, administrators and Board staff will collate, analyze and review all data gathered for the 2023-2024 school year and present a final report to the Board and to all stakeholders.

The annual final report will provide evidenced based information on the achievement of the Board's annual Strategic Directions Action Plan and the achievement of specific goals within Niagara Catholic's multi-year strategic plan, (MYSP)

Attached

Appendix A - Vision, Mission, Values Statements and Strategic Directions for the school years 2021-2026

Appendix B - Niagara Catholic Strategic Directions Action Plan Mid-Year Achievement Review 2023-2024

The Niagara Catholic Strategic Directions Action Plan Mid-Year Achievement Report 2023-2024
is presented for information.

Prepared by: Senior Administrative Council

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

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

Date: March 19, 2024



Our Mission

We are a Christ-centered Catholic faith community that celebrates diversity and fosters spiritual growth, inspiring all to reach their full potential in mind, body, and spirit.

Our Vision

Encountering souls and opening minds so that all students succeed.

Our Values

JUSTICE

We are committed to equity, works of social action, and the celebration of diversity.

COMPASSION

We practice forgiveness, generosity, kindness, humility, and service in our interactions with others.

STEWARDSHIP

We care and act respectfully and responsibly for all God's creation.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We take ownership for the impact and consequences of actions and decisions.

COMMUNITY

We foster connections where all belong and work collaboratively with our partners.

INTEGRITY

We act in a manner that is consistent with gospel values.

FAITHFULNESS

We are nourished by our Catholic faith through the word, spirit, and prayer.



2021 · 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

LISTENING, LEARNING, AND LEADING STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



ADVANCE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Focus on student success promoting and supporting all pathways for student achievement
- Support students' mental health & wellness
- Prepare students in global competencies



CELEBRATE THE RICHNESS OF OUR CATHOLIC FAITH AND OUR HOLISTIC, VALUES-BASED, CATHOLIC EDUCATION

- Anchor our work in the Gospel as lived in the person of Jesus Christ
- Prepare our students to live out the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations
- Appreciate and highlight faith-based role models putting a 'face to our faith'



FOSTER INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE, AND SAFE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES WHERE ALL ARE WELCOMED AND 'CALLED BY NAME'

- Strengthen and promote opportunities for student voice
- Advance Indigenous Education guided by the Truth & Reconciliation recommendations and the local Indigenous community
- Develop and honour a culture of respect, acceptance, and belonging
- Prioritize a diverse workforce that reflects our communities



MANAGE OUR RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD IN THE NIAGARA REGION

- Design opportunities to address changing enrollment
- Optimize our facilities through responsible stewardship and engage in environmental sustainability



FOSTER AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL OUR STAFF TO STRENGTHEN OUR WORK WITH STUDENTS

- Facilitate positive employee engagement, faith formation, and community belonging
- Create opportunities to promote staff health and wellness
- Invest in staff learning opportunities and leadership development

2023-2024 Strategic Plan – System Priorities and Action Plan -- Mid-Year Achievement Report

1. System Priorities -- Advance student achievement for all students

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
<p>1.1 Focus on student success promoting and supporting all pathways for student achievement</p>	<p>i. Increase awareness to build and develop a better understanding of pathways programming available i.e. SHSM, OYAP, CO-OP, DUAL CREDITS - for all students to pursue any of the post-secondary destinations (university, college, apprenticeships, workplace, community living)</p>	<p>i. Continue to plan events/ symposiums/workshops/conferences with all stakeholders – parents, students, community, educators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Job Fair & Career Expo for students and co-op teachers ▪ Pathways Programming Presentations ▪ Skilled Trades Promotion Night for parents and students ▪ Symposiums/Workshops focusing on the Skilled Trades & Technologies careers that are under-represented ▪ Experiential Learning Activities PD and resources for Guidance Counsellors, Co-op Teachers, Success Teachers, Program Chairs ▪ Skills Event ▪ Job Talks Student Showcase Video ▪ Building community and industry relationships through innovative and collaborative projects, i.e. Mayor’s Roundtable <p>ii. Building Capacity at each high school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decentralize SHSM funds - Schools will continue to execute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the number of employer/industry contacts to support opportunity offerings for students enrolled in all pathways programs – (i.e. experiential learning, co-op, reach ahead, industry recognized certifications/training) • Monitor enrollment numbers in all pathways and program components. • Monitor completion rates in all pathways programs • Participation in symposiums, workshops and events. 	<p>Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners in Trade Education Appreciation Breakfast Director, Principals, Trustees, Superintendents, Facilities Industry Partners • Co-op Teachers and Industry Professionals workshop to promote/increase co-op opportunities for Niagara Catholic students. <p>Completed Skilled Trade Awareness Presentations and Promotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 Tech Students attended the LEVEL UP Career Fair Hamilton- October 2023 • Indigenous Students participated in “Opportunity Knocks” OYAP Conference- October 2023 • Students in Co-op Culinary and Food and Nutrition Classes participated in Aspire Farm to Fork Career Fair-November 2023 • Niagara Catholic presence at the Niagara College Indigenous

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
		<p>all the requirements for the programs, but will be better tailored to school's community needs.</p> <p>iii. Expansion of the Dual Credits programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In addition to targeting at-risk students, this program is now open to all students, regardless of pathway and academic level 		<p>Post-Secondary Fair to support students-December 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niagara College Youth Women in Trades Conference-40 secondary female students interested in construction or electrical attended-December 2023 • Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Presentation-January 2024 • Students and Family Information Night-Denis Morris-February 2024 • Over 200 students participated in the Niagara Catholic Skilled Trades Competition-February 2024 the event was successful and well attended and covered by CHCH <p>In-Progress Skilled Trade Awareness Presentations and Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 400 students from grades 10-12 will participate in the Job Fair and Career Expo-April 11, 2024. • Students in grades 9-11 are invited to participate in the Niagara College Women in Trades Conference-April 2024 • Indigenous students in grades 10-12 will have the opportunity to

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
				<p>experience a variety of trades- May 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled Trades Promotion Night- Notre Dame College for student and parents in grades 6-11-May 15, 2024 • Destination College Students in grades 6, 7 and 8 will have an opportunity to visit Niagara College and participate in specialized programming showcasing College and trades- May 27-31, 2024. <p>Completed</p> <p>Professional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary principals sharing best practices on experiential learning opportunities to increase SHSM completion rates. • Guidance Counsellors • Niagara College Tour (hospitality, culinary, viticulture, beer making, horticulture, environment) • Secondary Teachers • Co-op – Health and Safety and OYAP • Guidance Teachers- MyBlueprint Course selections and SHSM • Tech Teachers <p>SHSM opportunities and best practices</p>

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
	ii. Increase the number of secondary students registered in eLearning courses by 10%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion and collaboration of eLearning courses with secondary school staff. Promotion of eLearning courses to students and families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of eLearning courses selected for the 2024-2025 school year. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive promotion and awareness will continue to increase student and staff participation and eLearning course selection. Standard agenda item: Secondary Principal Meetings, Program Chairs and Student Services Meetings. Professional development opportunities offered to eLearning teachers. <p>Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased eLearning course selection from 34 to 47. Increase in the number of secondary student enrolment target 100% successful.
	iii. Increase the number of students achieving or surpassing the provincial standards in literacy (Grades 3 and 6 EQAO, OSSLT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build educator capacity in literacy instruction and assessment. Continue the implementation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) approach to reading grounded in the Science of Reading. Organize professional learning sessions for all Educational Resource Teachers, Principals, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EQAO data by school and Board. Number of Lexia License Distribution users and accompanying data. Gains in Empower reading levels. Monitor number of educators participating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 260 Reading Screeners were administered between January and the start of the March Break to students with SEA equipment. 100 students from this group were scheduled for tier 3 reading intervention programming which began on March 18.

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
		<p>Vice Principals and educators on the Acadience Universal Screener</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the Universal Screener twice a year in Kindergarten to Grade 2 with fidelity across the system (October 2023 and May 2024) • Use screener data to decide on student placement in Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention programs where needed – targeted small group classroom instruction, Lexia and Empower 	<p>in literacy professional learning sessions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 282 students enrolled in Empower. Actual gains to be reported at year end. • PD for Principals on Structured Literacy • PD offered on implementation of the new language curriculum, with a focus on Strand B: The Foundations Of Language • After school learning series offered to staff, including a book study on “The Art and Science of Teaching Primary Reading” by Christopher Such for K-2 educators and A Guide To Explicit Instruction in Writing for grades 3-8 educators. • Training of ERTs • Continued Professional Development for all Gr. 11 NBE Teachers • Destreaming coaches working with ENG1W teachers - unpacking the new English curriculum, • Student voice in the Grade 9 classroom • Training on screeners - Grade 7-9 • 97 % of grade 9 students took ENL1W in semester one of this year. 2.9 % of those students

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
				<p>students are currently scheduled to repeat the course in grade 10 next year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of eligible students accessing SEA coaching for students and corrective reading support • Resource Teachers and Success Teachers access support of the Indigenous Student Engagement and Success Coach.
	<p>iv .Increase the number of students achieving the provincial standard in mathematics (Grades 3,6,9 EQAO).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build educator capacity in mathematics instruction and assessment. • Engaging educators in professional learning about Mathematics curricula with a focus on Grades 1-9 • Engaging Principals and Vice-Principals in networks for reflection and professional learning about the elements of a comprehensive math program, establishing coherence across classrooms, and coordinated support for educators. • Ensuring more regular use of MathUP School, MathUp Classroom, and Knowledgehook by educators for students and their families. • Supporting schools to set school and classroom targets for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of educators participating in numeracy professional learning • Number and type of numeracy professional learning sessions • Feedback from relevant stakeholders. • System and school leader observations in math classrooms • EQAO results for annual Grades 3,6, and 9 Mathematics Assessments, and cohort data as available. • Report card and credit accumulation data for Grades 1 to 9 in Mathematics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of Principal communities of practice - engage in the work of Short Learning Cycles • PD for Principal Leadership - Knowledgehook • Math Priority School Principals Content-building professional learning • Priority Schools in-classroom support (students & teachers of grades 3 & 6 in identified priority schools) • Destreaming in-classroom Support (Gr 7-10)-- students and teachers • Priority Schools & Destreaming Support-- participating educators engaging in professional learning sessions with release to build knowledge of curriculum, instructional practices, content for

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
		<p>increased numbers of students achieving the provincial standard on EQAO Mathematics Assessments and report cards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support students in grades 7 to 10 math. 		<p>teaching mathematics and responding to the needs of their students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All elementary schools- Math professional learning visits (2 for K-2/3, 2 visits for grade 3-8) focused on elements of our math program, High impact instructional practices, curriculum progression, number and algebra content and resource highlights MTH1W professional learning session to support goals in the Math Achievement Action Plan and a focus on meeting the needs of individual learners Knowledgehook after-school webinars (content focus at various grade levels) Knowledgehook in-person PA day workshop (a focus on differentiated instruction) PA Day professional learning focused on goals of the Math Achievement Action Plans including content-building through the use of MathUP Leadership K-8 Do the Math targeted intervention provided by Educational Resource Teachers in 12 schools, and Math Interventionist in 4 schools

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation and support of core and supplemental educator resources related to the priority actions in the Math Achievement Action Plan
<p>1.2 Support students' mental health & wellness</p>	<p>i. Implementation of the Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2021-2024 in collaboration with all system departments</p>	<p>The 2023-2024 Mental Health Action Plan includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to create safe and accepting school environments to address the anxiety, isolation, potential trauma and impact of COVID-19 on students Continuing equity, diversity, and inclusion learning and training for staff and students, supporting mentally healthy conversations about cultural humility, anti-discrimination, anti-Black racism, and anti-Indigenous racism Providing supports for 2SLGBTQ+ and specific populations who may require more or unique mental health and well-being support and services Continuing to promote the link between our Catholic faith and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate Safe and Accepting Schools Teams (SASTs) feedback into School Improvement and Equity Plans Review of school-based data from school climate surveys to inform programs, services and supports for students and the School Improvement and Equity Plans 	<p>On-going Review of Board and school-based data to enhance strategies supporting all students and student achievement, and to inform Board and School Student Achievement Plans</p> <p>On-going Mental health and well-being support and services for specific populations, by the Mental Health Lead, Social Workers, Child and Youth Workers</p> <p>On-going A school-based Mental Health and Well-Being Tool Kit developed by</p>

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
		<p>mental health and well-being through intentional messaging to staff and students on how our Faith and mental well-being are interconnected for student achievement and well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing with Social Emotional Learning by embedding SEL into curriculum and learning supporting mental health literacy with MOE learning modules for Grade 7 and 8 students aligned with health and physical education courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of professional learning and training opportunities on mental health and well-being for staff Number of staff participating in professional learning and training 	<p>Child and Youth Workers supports all students and the interconnection between our Catholic faith, mental well-being and student achievement</p> <p>Completed Training for grades 7 and 8 teachers (135 teachers) on the modules and mental health and well-being supports and services, by the Mental Health and Well-Being Lead, in collaboration with the Program and Innovation Department: Religious Education and Family Life, and Health and Physical Education Consultants</p> <p>Completed Professional learning sessions about mental health and well-being for all elementary and secondary teachers (1400 teachers) and support staff (400) presented by the Mental Health Lead and Social Workers on two PA Days-November 24, 2023 and February 15, 2024.</p> <p>Completed Applied Suicide Intervention Skills' Training (ASIST) for (30 teachers) by the Mental Health Lead and a Board Social Worker.</p>

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting <i>Pathways to Care</i> by ensuring that students receive timely and responsive, evidence – based prevention and early intervention services at the school and in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce and support the implementation of the Cultural Humility Self-Reflection Tool for School Staff from School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) for all staff with a feedback survey about professional learning 	<p>On-going The Mental Health and Well-Being Team: 1) school level with Child and Youth Workers, 2) clinical support with school Social Workers and, 3) clinical support and services from Pathstone.</p> <p>On-going</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of the SMHO- Cultural Humility Self-Reflection Tool for School Staff to: Senior Administrative Council SMHO- Leadership Course for Senior Leaders, Trustees, (Board report), Principals and Vice-Principals (Principals' Meeting), Grades 7 and 8 teachers, Child and Youth Workers, one elementary school staff and one secondary school staff. A feedback survey will be administered to support system implementation of the Cultural Humility Self-Reflection Tool in 2024-2025 with all staff.

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide feedback from the Board Mental Health Leadership Committee to school administrators to share with staff • Utilize EVERFI annual reports to review data about the implementation of programs to support SEL, bullying, and well-being with the support of Child and Youth Workers • Number of Faith and Mental Health learning opportunities for staff with the Mental Health Champions • Number of students receiving evidence-based prevention and early intervention services following the tiered approach through the Mental Health 	<p>On-going 3 meetings per school year to review mental health and well-being system and school initiatives with all departments and staff</p> <p>On-going Review of data and EVERFI resources available to support Kindergarten to grade 12 teachers and support staff: Child and Youth Workers on the February 15, 2024 PA Day and Secondary Principals and Vice-Principals on March 6, 2024.</p> <p>On-going The celebration of Catholic Education Week and Mental Health and Well-Being Week in May 2024 with system and school-based activities focusing on student voice.</p> <p>On-going 469 students received clinical services from September 2023 to March 2024 from Board Social Workers</p> <p>On-going</p>

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
			Team: Board Social Workers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Mental Health Literacy curriculum in collaboration with Program & Innovation and Health and Physical Education 	Monitoring of the implementation of the mental health and literacy modules with a survey for grades 7 and 8 teachers
1.3 Prepare students in global competencies	i. To ensure intentional implementation of global competencies and the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations into all School Improvement and Equity Plans (SIEP).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring awareness of the Global Competencies and identify opportunities to integrate global competencies into existing programs, lessons and initiatives. Building staff capacity through School-based Team (SBT) discussion informed by central staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit of all SIEP's. 	

2. System Priorities -- Celebrate the richness of our Catholic faith and our holistic values-based Catholic education.

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
<p>2.1 Anchor our work in the Gospel as lived in the person of Jesus Christ</p>	<p>i. Continue to support and promote opportunities for staff and students to engage in social justice work that promotes Catholic values, and reflects the diversity of our communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education of staff and students on the Catholic understanding of justice and charity. • Provide new opportunities of outreach to Catholic community partners. • Connect students with community partners for volunteer opportunities and building skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student attitudes through student surveys. • Number of students and schools participating throughout the year in social justice initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity provided during PA Day for school staff to complete a social justice initiative of their choosing to give back to their school community or local community. • Promotion of justice based community service hour opportunities in high school religion courses • Increase in schools participating in Development and Peace initiatives – almost all NCDSB schools are D&P schools participating in achieving social justice badges
	<p>ii. Strengthen the partnership between the Diocese and Board to support the pastoral care of our Catholic Schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Pastoral Care of Catholic Schools document in collaboration with the Diocese of St. Catharines • Facilitate workshops/presentations for Principals, Chaplaincy Leaders, Pastors, and religious partners to share resources and its implementation for our schools. • Scheduled regular meetings between the Diocese (Bishop, Vicar of Education and Deanery) and the Board (Director of Education) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from stakeholders regarding Pastoral Care of Catholic Schools document and workshops/presentations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral Care of Catholic Schools – awaiting response from Vicar of Education • Addition of Vicar of Education to Board Faith Formation Team which designs and implements staff faith formation opportunities for all staff. • Collaboration with Vicar of Education to create liturgies for Board level meetings and upcoming conferences being hosted

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				in Niagara by the School Board. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation of all diocese pastors and workers to Advent Christmas Retreat/Meeting • Invitation of different parish priests to celebrate Mass at the CEC for staff.
2.2 Prepare our students to live out the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations	i. Engage students in exploring what it means for them to become an Ontario Catholic School Graduate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations and highlighting them through grade 9 retreats. • Principals to incorporate Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations into award recognition. • Provide monthly resources highlighting on OCSGE for reflection in elementary and high school classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in grade 9 retreats. • Increase in school-based awards connected to the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of Niagara Catholic Ontario Graduation Expectation Posters for use in schools and classrooms • Promotion of use of CCC cross curricular lessons in elementary schools which focus on one OCSGE per month.
2.3 Appreciate and highlight faith-based role models putting a 'face to our faith'	i. Increase awareness and dialogue around vocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with Diocesan Vocations Director and Serra Club to facilitate secondary vocations fairs. • Organize and provide a list of religious orders and clergy available for presentations in elementary classes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of schools in vocations fairs or presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation in some schools to invite Soliel sisters into elementary schools • Open invitation by schools to have parish priest into schools • Ask Father Paul – questions continuing to accept questions and provide responses to schools.
	ii. Increase awareness of local faith role models in our school and parish communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and celebrate the faith stories of students, staff, and members of our parish communities through social media engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with social media posts (podcast or video clips of faith stories) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of role model students in NCDSB Chronicle • Highlight of FIAT in elementary schools

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizing Celebrating Excellence Awards to recognize students, staff and alumni that model our Catholic values. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posts on board social media to highlight staff who contribute to the community Award of Distinction being awarded to three individuals who are and were integral to Catholic Education in Niagara Celebrating Excellence Awards continue to be given to deserving student recipients. Inspiration Awards continue to be given to staff who go above and beyond in their jobs.

3. System Priorities -- Foster inclusive, equitable and safe school communities where all are welcomed and ‘called by name’

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
3.1 <i>Strengthen and promote opportunities for student voice</i>	i. Develop greater opportunities to honour and promote student voice among Indigenous Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with the Student Senate in order to create a framework and implementation plan that best supports this goal. Collaborate with the Indigenous Community to develop a strategy to encourage student voice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater opportunities provided to Indigenous Students in schools that facilitate and promote Indigenous Student Voice. 	Hiring of an Indigenous Student Voice Facilitator to work with Student Councils and the Student Senate
	ii. Increase the number of long- term stay visa students by 30%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to facilitate partnerships with International Agencies to support International Student enrolment with the Niagara Catholic School Communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrolment of International Students Review student feedback to inform future activities and events and share feedback as appropriate 	Ongoing Niagara Catholic has built new trusting partnerships with international agencies to promote and increase international student enrolment.
	iii. Ensure that student feedback is collected at system/school activities and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and include a student feedback survey as part of system/ school activities and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review student feedback to inform future activities and events and share feedback as appropriate 	
	iv. Expand the role of Youth Accessibility Ambassador in both elementary and secondary schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulate a grant application to secure Ministry funding to deliver phase 2 of the “All Access Home.” project 2023-2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote school sharing back to the system how they are recognizing accessibility challenges and reducing barriers within their own school through student-led project initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$140 000.00 grant secured for the 2023-24 school year. On Feb 23, 2024 – 16 schools/51 students participated virtually in the first day of sharing among the YAA’s that was hosted by NC and Parasport Ontario. School assemblies and “all ability”

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				recess games and clubs have begun. A second day is being scheduled. Conference dates set.
3.2 Advance Indigenous Education guided by the Truth & Reconciliation recommendations and the local Indigenous community	i. Continue to provide Professional Development opportunities to Indigenous Champions and School Staff in collaboration with the Indigenous Community and System Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage Indigenous Champions to create an implementation strategy, which outlines a scope and sequence of activities, and resources that address curriculum expectations as well as honour specific days of importance. Continue to collaborate with the Indigenous Community to review resources and activities to best address and honour Indigenous Culture. The Indigenous Community Connections Facilitator continues to engage with schools and the Indigenous Community to facilitate greater collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate strategies in School Improvement Planning activities Teacher annual learning plans include specific goals to implement strategies and resources in lesson plans Greater presence of the Indigenous Community in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indigenous Community Connections Facilitator continues to work with each school to promote the presence of members for the Indigenous Community in our schools. Dr. Niigaan Sinclair Gr. 11 NBE Classroom Presentations in all Secondary Schools. October PA day Dr. Sinclair presentation to all Guidance and Social Science Teachers -Indigenous Lead Gary Parker full day sessions with Child and Youth Workers Indigenous Lead, Gary Parker PD sessions with Program Chairs of English and Religion
	ii. Develop greater awareness and understanding of the Truth and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with the Indigenous Community to create a professional development framework and implementation strategy to best address 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback and participation provided at the at each session 	Session #2 with Board of Trustees and Sr. Administration took place on December 5, 2023

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	Reconciliation Recommendations among Administrators, Sr. Administration, and the Board of Trustees	the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater participation 	
3.3 <i>Develop and honour a culture of respect, acceptance and belonging</i>	i. Develop the Niagara Catholic Equity Action Plan aligned with the Multi- Year Strategic Plan- “Listening, Learning, Leading”, and the Board Improvement and Equity Plan with a system implementation strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage the Board Equity Committee to inform the Equity Action Plan with an implementation strategy that honors the diversity of the Niagara Catholic community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of stakeholders who participate in the development process Stakeholder feedback Number of Board Equity Committee meetings Draft Board Equity Action Plan 	<p>Completed Board Equity Action Plan 2023-2026 focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School and Classroom Practices Data Collection, Integration and Reporting Leadership, Governance and Human Resources Services in consultation and feedback from Senior Administrative Council, Board of Trustees, (Board Report), Mental Health and Well-Being Leadership team, Principals and Vice-Principals, Consultants and Coordinators, and the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee <p>On-going A question about the Board Equity Action Plan will be included in the Multi-Year Strategic Plan Survey (MYSP) to stakeholders.</p>

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
	ii. Build educator capacity in culturally relevant and responsive approaches to teaching and learning from K- 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing and implementing classroom and school environments that reflect the diversity of the student population • Ensuring culturally relevant and responsive strategies are being implemented in instruction and assessment practices in K to 12 classrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom and school audits using the EQAO Student Questionnaires on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion • Review of Multi-Year Strategic Plan Survey Results with Principals • Principal observations about culturally relevant and responsive approaches to instruction and assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of educators engaged in professional learning 	<p>On-going Review and analysis of EQAO data about equity, diversity and inclusion by the Board and schools to support all students</p> <p>On-going Review of results from the MYPSP survey to inform School Student Achievement Plans</p> <p>On-going</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations and feedback about culturally relevant and responsive approaches to instruction and assessment to improve the student achievement of all students by Principals and teachers • Black History Month celebrations and school-based activities for all students with system supports as outlined in EIE Memo 014 In February 2024 and as submitted by Principals on the Black History Month template to Family of Schools' Superintendents. <p>Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unlearn.org Poster Pack 4 provided as a classroom resource about equity, diversity and inclusion to all

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				<p>elementary and secondary schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals, Vice-Principals, and the Mental Health and Well-Being team (100 administrators) participated in a professional learning session by the unlearn team to implement poster pack 4 at the October 26th, 2023 Principals' meeting. <p>On-going Equity, diversity, and inclusion training for all educators (1400 teachers) on the PA Day of February 15, 2024 for all educators</p>
	iii. Analyze elementary and secondary student census responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzing the <i>My Niagara Catholic</i> Student Census responses to develop thematic reports and share highlights among relevant stakeholders Developing a plan to connect census data to other student data for the improvement of student achievement and well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census reports Stakeholder feedback about the findings 	<p>On-going Elementary and Secondary Student Census reports will be reviewed to develop a plan to support the student achievement of all students.</p>
	iv. Hire a Board Equity, Advisor/Lead in 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Equity Advisor/Lead will support programs, resources, and training at the system and school levels Board Equity Lead will support the implementation of the Board Equity Action Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of programs, resources and supports provided to the system and schools Number of visits to schools to review School Improvement and Equity Plans 	<p>On-going</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Superintendent of Education provides leadership to schools and the implementation of the Board Equity Action Plan 2023-2026 in consultation with other departments, to provide programs,

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of PD training sessions for all staff • Feedback from training sessions • Review of the implementation of the Board Equity Action Plan with the Board Equity Committee 	<p>resources and supports for all students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity training of all Kindergarten teachers and Early Childhood Educators on the February 16th, 2024 PA Day supported by Equity and Inclusive Education. • Feedback from February 16th, 2024 PA Day session on Equity and Inclusive education provided by Staff Development. • Family of Schools' Superintendents visit schools to review School Student Achievement Plans to address the learning needs of all students.
<p>3.4 Prioritize a diverse workforce that reflects our communities</p>	<p>i. Take intentional efforts to recruit diversity within our staffing complement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity, inclusion, equity statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers website • Engage community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater visibility 	<p>Addition of self-identified Indigenous staff to school leadership positions.</p>

4. System Priorities -- Manage our resources effectively to build a sustainable Catholic School Board in the Niagara Region

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
4.1 Design opportunities to address changing enrollment	i. Increase student growth and retention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action recommendations by Growth and Retention Committee approved by the Board of Trustees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student enrolment data. 	
	ii. Provide meaningful evidence-based reports that will support decision making in managing our resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and share updated information with respect to on-the-ground capacity, utilization, staffing, enrolment, and capital planning. Proactively plan for portable moves on a yearly basis. Engage in boundary reviews in order to improve school utilization across the Board. Optimize operational resources to match school utilization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information shared on MyNiagaraCatholic / Facilities Services. Number of unplanned portable moves requested in September. Reduce the average under-utilized space in schools by 10% per year to align with utilization. Number of boundary reviews completed yearly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration on website underway. 0 portable moves requested for September 2023. Attendance Area Review completed for Blessed Trinity Family of Schools (New Elementary School in Lincoln (Beamsville))
	iii. Update Long Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide updated LTAP complete with specific goals and timelines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed LTAP delivered in the 2023/24 school year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LTAP for 2024-2029 completed and approved by Board in Feb 2024
4.2 Optimize our facilities through responsible stewardship and engage in environmental sustainability	i. Implementation of new Environmental Stewardship & Sustainability Policy and AOP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with school administration and custodial services to ensure understanding of the policy, AOP and the associated goals/targets within. Share school progress with respect to energy consumption and waste reduction across the Board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed overview presented at Principal Meeting and Custodial In-Service (July 2023). Implement Eco-Dashboard on Board website to share school and Board-wide statistics on energy and waste diversion from landfills. 	

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	ii. Increase EcoSchool participation across Board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandate a minimum level of EcoSchools certification across the Board. • Provide educational opportunities for staff/students on the EcoSchools program and its requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate a minimum expectation of bronze certification to schools at the beginning of the 2023-24 school year. • Workshops/webinars offered to schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EcoSchool communications sent to schools.
	iii. Offer professional development opportunities to administrators and staff to promote and encourage environmental stewardship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan professional development opportunities via workshop or subject matter expertise for PD days and/or Principal meetings at least twice per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of professional development opportunities offered per year. 	
	iv. Public assets are safeguarded, and resources are used effectively and efficiently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align Ministry funding to Ministry of Education initiatives and priorities • Resources allocated to achieve 2023-2024 system priorities and goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve Ministry of Education financial compliance measures • Balanced 2023-2024 Annual Budget 	
	v. Create a formal Security Management Plan complete with associated Policies & AOPs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document current security processes and complete gap analysis against industry standards. • Implement recommendations into formal Policies & AOPs. • Create implementation plan for operational recommendations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and AOPs drafted and approved. • Security Management Plan completed and presented to senior administration. • Implementation of operational recommendations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security Management Plan completed. Presentation to senior team pending.

5. System Priorities -- Foster authentic relationships with all our staff to strengthen our work with students

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
<p>5.1 Facilitate positive employee engagement, faith formation, and community belonging</p>	<p>i. Improve onboarding experience for all job classifications</p> <p>ii. Create Employee Newsletter for all staff</p> <p>iii. Recruitment referral program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop New Hire Orientation (non-union, CUPE) ● Improve onboarding workflow efficiency (forms, MAC) ● Create 3 month check in with salaried new hire (survey – meet and greet) ● Create an employee newsletter that connects employees and promotes the culture of working at Niagara Catholic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highlight new service improvements, policies, AOPs. <p>-Connect the Board through get to know stories highlighting those support staff who serve the system</p> <p>-Celebrate school achievements</p> <p>-Health and Safety</p> <p>-Health and Wellness highlighting strategies</p> <p>Develop an internal referral program for existing staff recommending NCDSB to their social networks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved fill rates to when an employee is hired to when they start on the job. ● Engagement of new hires to ensure they are informed (survey). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CommUNITY newsletter has been launched and sent on a monthly basis. Stories are employee focused celebrating the achievements of staff and sharing important information on health and safety, wellness and benefits. ● Union Exempt new hire orientation is in development with a projected launch April/May ● New hire orientation for casual Educational Assistants has been launched. ● Employee referral program is in development

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
	iv. Complete Job evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job evaluation for CUPE Job evaluation for non-Union 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract and retain qualified candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Job description templates and manager guide have been established. Collaboration with CUPE executives continue to take place in the formation of the job evaluation process for CUPE positions
5.2 Create opportunities to promote staff health and wellness	i. Develop integrated health and wellness program ii. Create greater onboarding orientation outlining benefits iii. Develop mental health framework (mental health leadership team) iv. Work with Trustee wellness committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Business Intelligence dashboards that identify school absenteeism trends Create wellness events Leverage Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP) to provide more tailored mental health supports Educate staff on employee benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in Wellness Events. Usage analytics from the EFAP provider. Reduced absenteeism due to illness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced Run to the North Pole wellness challenge. Over 400 participants with significant positive feedback. Introduction to 8 week challenge scheduled for April launch. Provide greater communication on employee benefits for all groups through direct and indirect communication with staff Provided managers with resources on supporting mental health in the workplace Introduced health and wellness support for all staff who experiences absences of 5 days or greater
	v. Re-engage Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) and Occupational health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-site JHSC member posting Training event – Ministry of Labour and JHSC members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer incidents Less time loss accidents Lower WSIB costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in concussion committee to evaluate and identify prevention opportunities for injuries

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
	<p>teams to identify prevention strategies in schools</p> <p>vi. Engage stakeholders (labour, management, front line) to continue to identify prevention strategies for violence against workers.</p> <p>vii. Identify trending accident statistics and implement prevention programs and strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize the NCVLE (our Learning Management System) to migrate all Health and Safety training records 		<p>(concussion) due to balls in playground and gym</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created posting for JHSC and communication board for all schools Violence in schools committee with a focus on prevention for workplace injuries due to violence against Educational Assistants to launch in April. Committee is comprised in partnership with EA's, Special Education representatives, CUPE Executive, Principals, Safe Schools and Human Resources.
	<p>viii. Implement attendance support program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analytics Sound processes Training and development for all stakeholders including administrators, management, labour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in absenteeism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader training and resources developed and provided. ASP in development Introduced touch point processes to keep engaged with staff who are experiencing prolonged absences with a focus on early safe return to work
<p>5.3 Invest in staff learning opportunities and leadership development</p>	<p>i. Increase the number of staff interested in leadership professional development opportunities.</p>	<p>i. Continue to provide professional development for aspiring and current school leaders such as:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of staff participating in leadership professional learning opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19 teachers are participating monthly representing both elementary and secondary schools. Formerly referred to as the AIP has become the Discerning Principal Program.

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal professional development sessions continue to be offered through the various Leadership Development Programs: <u>Aspiring Leaders Program</u> - Offered to all Board Employees interested in leadership opportunities. <u>Administrators Internship Program</u> – Professional Development Opportunities offered to all Members of the Vice Principals Pool includes a partnership working with CPCO to offer a fully subsidized Special Education Additional Qualification Course with a focus on Autism. <u>Vice-Principal Mentorship Program</u> - for all Current Vice-Principals <u>Principal Mentorship Program</u> – for all new Principals with 1-2 years' experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of staff in leadership pools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 principals are now eligible for the Principal Mentorship program. 12 Elementary vice-principals participate in the monthly vice-principal meeting. December 2023, all members of the Vice Principal Pool completed the Special Education Autism Additional Qualification course through a partnership with CPCO The First Cohort of the Aspiring Leaders Program completed the four module Program in November – 80Participants The Second Cohort of this program began with the first session in February 29th with 50 participants.

GOALS	ACTION (What will we do to get there?)	WORK PLAN (What are staff doing)	MEASURES (How will we monitor & measure our progress towards achieving our goals?)	Monitoring / Progress
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * PD sessions offered through these programs are open to all Principals and Vice Principals 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Facilitate staff training and professional development modules through the NCVLE Learning Management System (LMS). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop expertise among school staff to access training and professional development modules • Develop a framework to facilitate the tracking of completed training modules. • Promote the use of the Learning Management System as a platform to provide professional development opportunities to all staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Board staff have developed the ability to navigate the LMS • Greater use of the LMS among system staff as a platform to store professional development opportunities for future reference 	

**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
MARCH 19, 2024**

PUBLIC SESSION

**TITLE: CORRESPONDENCE
LETTER FROM ONTARIO OMBUDSMAN**



J. Paul Dubé, Ombudsman

March 13, 2024

Camillo Cipriano
Director of Education
Niagara Catholic District School Board
427 Rice Road
Welland ON L3C 7C1

Sent by email: Camillo.Cipriano@ncdsb.com

Dear Director Cipriano,

Re: Open meeting complaints

My Office received two complaints relating to meetings held by the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of the Niagara Catholic District School Board (the “School Board”). One complaint alleged that during a closed meeting on June 7, 2023, the Board improperly discussed whether members of the public would be required to show identification in order to attend a Board meeting on June 20, 2023. The complaint also raised concerns that the Board did not provide the public with information about the matters to be discussed *in camera* on June 7, 2023.

My Office also received two complaints that the School Board required members of the public to show identification in order to attend the Board's June 20, 2023 meeting, which the complainants felt was contrary to the *Education Act's* open meeting requirements. One complaint also raised concerns that they believed this meeting was not livestreamed.

I am writing to share the outcome of my review of these complaints.

Ombudsman's role and authority

The Ombudsman is an independent and impartial Officer of the Ontario Legislature. My Office has the authority to address complaints about public sector bodies, as well as services provided by children’s aid societies and residential licensees, and the provision of French language services under the *French Language Services Act*.

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Since September 1, 2015, the Ontario Ombudsman has the authority to carry out impartial and independent reviews and investigations of complaints concerning the administrative conduct of school boards, including complaints concerning meetings held by a board of trustees or a committee of a board.

In addition, my Office is the closed meeting investigator for more than half of Ontario's 444 municipalities. As the province's default closed meeting investigator, my Office is responsible for determining whether a municipality has complied with the open meeting requirements outlined in the *Municipal Act, 2001*.¹

My Office has reviewed hundreds of closed meetings since 2008. To assist municipal councils, staff, and the public, we have developed an online digest of closed meeting cases. This searchable repository was created to provide easy access to the Ombudsman's decisions on, and interpretations of, the municipal open meeting rules. While the open meeting requirements in the *Municipal Act* differ from those in the *Education Act*² (the "Act"), school boards can consult the digest to inform their discussions and decisions on whether certain matters can or should be discussed in closed session, as well as issues related to open meeting procedures. Summaries of the Ombudsman's previous decisions can be found in the digest:
www.ombudsman.on.ca/digest.

Ombudsman review

On September 7, 2023, my Office advised the Niagara Catholic District School Board of my intent to investigate these complaints. My Office reviewed the open and closed meeting materials, relevant correspondence, the School Board's website, and the School Board's By-Laws Policy (the "By-Laws"). We also reviewed correspondence, pictures, and videos submitted by a complainant. My Office interviewed the School Board's Director of Education, Controller of Facilities Services, Supervisor of Protective Services, a Communications Specialist, and the Chair of the Board.

¹ SO 2001, c 25.

² RSO 1990, c E.2.



June 7, 2023 meeting

The Board of Trustees held a special meeting in the boardroom of its Catholic Education Centre (the “Education Centre”) on June 7, 2023, beginning at 5:00 p.m. After the Board held an opening prayer and approved the meeting agenda, it passed a resolution at 5:04 p.m. to move into closed session. The Board did not cite a specific closed meeting exception from the *Education Act*, nor did it provide the public with information about the subject to be discussed in closed session. During this closed session, the Board discussed a code of conduct complaint and a lawyer provided the Board with legal advice. The Board then returned to open session at 5:36 p.m. and passed resolutions to approve the recommendations outlined in “Item 1” and “Item 1.1” of the Board’s *in camera* agenda. The Board then held a “moment of silent reflection for life”, and adjourned the meeting at 5:40 p.m.

Analysis

June 7 closed session discussion

My Office received a complaint alleging that on June 7, the Board improperly discussed, while *in camera*, whether members of the public would be required to show identification in order to attend a specific future meeting.

Section 207 of the *Education Act* requires that all meetings of a board of trustees and a committee of the board be open to the public, subject to prescribed exceptions. My Office did not find any evidence to suggest that during the June 7, 2023 closed meeting, the Board discussed whether members of the public would be required to show identification in order to attend a Board meeting on June 20, 2023. Rather, the Board received legal advice about an ongoing code of conduct matter.

Information about matters to be discussed in closed session

We also received a complaint that the Board did not provide the public with information about the matters to be discussed *in camera* on June 7, 2023.

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During our investigation, the School Board confirmed that the Board did not provide the public with information about the matters to be discussed in closed session, which is consistent with its usual practice.

Unlike the *Municipal Act, 2001*, the *Education Act* does not require that a board of trustees or committee pass a resolution in open session to authorize a closed session, nor does it require the Board to provide information about the matters to be discussed in closed session. The School Board's By-Laws do not require the Board to pass a resolution in open session to authorize a closed session, nor do they require the Board to provide information about the matters to be discussed in closed session.

In *Farber v. Kingston*, the Ontario Court of Appeal noted that a municipal council's resolution to go into a closed meeting should provide a general description of the issue to be discussed in a way that maximizes the information available to the public while not undermining the reason for excluding the public.³ Publicly stating the issue to be discussed in closed session enhances the transparency of local democracy and ensures that decision-makers are accountable when they discuss matters behind closed doors.

In the future, I encourage the Board to adopt the best practice of providing the public with meaningful information about the matters to be discussed *in camera*. In addition, I encourage the Board to adopt the best practice of indicating which exception it intends to rely on for each matter discussed in closed session, as I have previously encouraged municipal councils to do.⁴ These practices provide the public with meaningful information about the issues to be discussed *in camera* and inspire confidence that the meeting is being properly closed.

June 20, 2023 meeting

My Office received two complaints that the School Board required members of the public to show identification in order to attend the June 20, 2023 Board meeting in

³ *Farber v. Kingston (City)*, 2007 ONCA 173 at para 21, online: <<https://canlii.ca/t/1qtzl>>.

⁴ See, for example: Letter from the Ontario Ombudsman to the City of Pickering (23 September 2020), online: <<https://www.ombudsman.on.ca/resources/reports,-cases-and-submissions/municipal-meetings/2020/city-of-pickering>>.



person. Both complainants said that they were denied entry to the meeting room for this meeting. One complainant also alleged that the meeting was not livestreamed.

Background

During a regular Board meeting on May 23, 2023, student artwork in the Education Centre was vandalized. The media reported that protests were expected to take place outside of the Education Centre during the next regular Board meeting on June 20, 2023.⁵ The School Board publicly stated that it was concerned about the health, safety, and well-being of School Board staff, trustees, and members of the public at the June 20, 2023 meeting.⁶

Due to these concerns, the School Board cancelled the “Student Achievement Celebration” scheduled to be held on June 20, and asked staff at the Education Centre to work from home that day. In advance of the meeting, senior members of the School Board’s administration and the Chair of the Board met with the Niagara Regional Police Service and a security firm to discuss a safety plan for the meeting.

Sign-in procedures

The Board of Trustees held a regular meeting in the Education Centre’s boardroom on June 20, 2023 beginning at 6:30 p.m. Police officers and private security guards were stationed inside and outside of the Education Centre during the meeting. According to the media, the police estimated that approximately 350 to 400 individuals attended the protests.⁷

⁵ Don Redmond, “Protest anticipated at Niagara Catholic trustees meeting over Pride-flag motion”, *insauga* (20 June 2023), online: <<https://www.insauga.com/protest-anticipated-at-niagara-catholic-trustees-meeting-over-pride-flag-motion/>>.

⁶ Victoria Nicolaou, “LGBTQ protest, motion vote went as anticipated for Niagara Catholic: board chair”, *St. Catharines Standard* (21 June 2023), online: <https://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/news/niagara-region/lgbtq-protest-motion-vote-went-as-anticipated-for-niagara-catholic-board-chair/article_b1d8cf76-d096-5b46-90f8-1fe7b3440d3e.html>.

⁷ *Ibid.*





J. Paul Dubé, Ombudsman

The School Board's typical practice is to require members of the public to sign into meetings for in-person attendance by providing their name and telephone number. Both the School Board's Supervisor of Protective Services and the Controller of Facilities Services told my Office that individuals had signed into previous meetings using fake names, such as "Mickey Mouse." The Chair of the Board of Trustees and the Director of Education said that on the recommendation of the Niagara Regional Police Service, the School Board required all members of the public, including School Board employees, to show identification listing their name and address in order to attend the June 20, 2023 meeting in person. This protocol was implemented to ensure that people provided their real names and addresses, which could then be used to follow up with them, if needed, due to safety or security concerns (for example, after this meeting, the School Board issued a trespass notice to an individual because of their "aggressive and belligerent" conduct during the meeting). The School Board was flexible with respect to the type of identification provided, and did not require government-issued or photo identification. As an example, the Director of Education told my Office that an individual showed the label on their asthma inhaler to verify their name.

My Office reviewed posters that were posted outside of the Education Centre and which stated, "ALL VISITORS ARE REQUIRED TO SHOW IDENTIFICATION AND SIGN IN BEFORE ENTERING." However, neither the meeting agenda nor the School Board's website were updated to inform members of the public that they would be required to show identification in order to attend this meeting in person.

The total number of people who wanted to attend this meeting in person exceeded the meeting room's maximum capacity of approximately 108 people. People who were granted access to the meeting room were provided with numbered badges to ensure that the meeting room did not exceed its maximum capacity. An overflow line formed outside of the meeting room, and when someone left the meeting room, the School Board allowed the next person in line to enter it. The Chair of the Board of Trustees said that two individuals were denied entry to the meeting room because they refused to verify their identities by showing identification. The School Board does not have any written records documenting these incidents. The Chair of the Board of Trustees and the Supervisor of Protective Services told my Office that no one who signed in and showed identification was denied entry to the meeting room, except when it was at capacity.

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Individuals also had the option of observing the meeting live on the School Board's website without the need to provide identifying information. The Controller of Facilities Services said that members of the public who were at the Education Centre were able to use the School Board's Wi-Fi network in order to observe the meeting online.

Analysis

Sign-in procedure

As noted above, under the *Education Act*, all meetings of a board of trustees and a committee of the board must be open to the public, subject to prescribed exceptions.⁸ The Ontario Court of Appeal has affirmed that a school board has the authority to regulate its meetings to ensure "decorous conduct by all attending the meeting" and to prevent behaviour that would "detract from the effectiveness of the meeting and have an adverse effect on...free and uninhibited discussion."⁹

Although decided in a different context, I have previously noted that municipalities must be careful about placing conditions on the public's ability to freely access and observe open meetings, since the intent of the open meeting provisions of the *Municipal Act* is to permit people to observe the political process.¹⁰ However, my Office has also found that the open meeting requirements in the *Municipal Act* do not preclude a municipal council from taking appropriate measures to preserve security and maintain the order of council meetings.¹¹ Further, as I noted in my May 2017 report, "Counter Encounter: Investigation into a complaint about the Township of Red Rock", an employer is justified in seeking to protect its staff from harassment from members of the public, consistent with its obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.¹²

⁸ s 207(1-2.1).

⁹ *Radio Chum 1050 Ltd et al v Board of Education for City of Toronto*, 1964 CanLII 609 (ON CA) at 1, online: <<https://canlii.ca/t/gwf61>>.

¹⁰ *Alberton (Township of) (Re)*, 2023 ONOMBUD 11 at para 27, online: <<https://canlii.ca/t/jz4gd>>.

¹¹ *Ibid* at para 28; *London (City of) (Re)*, 2016 ONOMBUD 4 at para 51, online: <<https://canlii.ca/t/gt8dh>>.

¹² Ontario Ombudsman, *Counter Encounter: Investigation into a complaint about the Township of Red Rock* (May 2017) at para 59, online: <<https://www.ombudsman.on.ca/resources/reports,-cases-and-submissions/reports-on-investigations/2017/counter-encounter>>.



The School Board required members of the public to show identification in order to attend this meeting in person due to security concerns arising from the protests that took place outside of the Education Centre during the meeting. This practice was recommended to the School Board by the Niagara Regional Police Service, and was intended to ensure that people signed into the meeting using their real names and addresses, which could then be used to follow up with individuals, if needed, due to safety or security concerns.

School boards have the authority to regulate their meetings to preserve safety and security and to maintain order, but must be careful about placing overly restrictive conditions on the public's ability to freely access and observe open meetings. I recently found that similar security measures implemented by the Durham District School Board for in-person attendance at meetings were reasonable, given the documented safety concerns facing the School Board.¹³

In this case, members of the public could freely access and observe the June 20, 2023 meeting online without the need to provide any identifying information. I am satisfied that the School Board's security measures for in-person attendance at the June 20, 2023 meeting were reasonable in the circumstances, given the safety concerns of the School Board.

In the future, I encourage the Board to adopt the best practice of clearly communicating any security protocols and conditions for entry in its public notice of the meeting.

The School Board also told us that two individuals were denied entry to the meeting room because they refused to show identification, but the School Board does not have any written records documenting these incidents. I encourage the School Board to adopt the best practice of creating and maintaining records of any instances where individuals are denied entry to a meeting room.

¹³ Letter from the Ontario Ombudsman to the Durham District School Board (29 November 2023), online: <<https://www.ombudsman.on.ca/what-we-do/topics/education/investigations-and-reviews-school-board-meetings/durham-district-school-board-review-of-a-meeting-on-june-5.-2023>>.



Livestream

One complaint raised concerns that the June 20, 2023 meeting was not livestreamed.

During our investigation, the School Board said that this meeting was livestreamed on its website. The June 20, 2023 meeting agenda also includes the meeting's livestream link. My Office reviewed the signs and handouts that the School Board gave to members of the public outside of the Education Centre, which contained both a QR code and a link to access the meeting's livestream. In addition, the Controller of Facilities Services said us that people were able to access the School Board's Wi-Fi network to observe the meeting online. A School Board staff member indicated that they observed people watching the livestream of the meeting outside the Education Centre. The Director of Education and the Chair of the Board of Trustees said that they were both contacted after the meeting by people who said they had watched the meeting online. My Office reviewed a picture of a computer displaying the meeting's livestream, as well as a screenshot of a text message in which the sender says they "watched" the meeting.

Based on the available evidence, I am satisfied that the June 20, 2023 meeting was livestreamed on the School Board's website.

Meeting room capacity

Although neither complaint specifically raised this concern with my Office, the total number of people who wanted to attend this meeting in person exceeded the meeting room's maximum capacity. The meeting room has a maximum capacity of 108 people, inclusive of trustees, School Board staff members, and members of the public. As noted above, the media reported that the police estimated that approximately 350 to 400 individuals attended the protests held outside the Education Centre. My Office was told that an overflow line formed outside of the meeting room, and that when someone left the meeting room, the School Board allowed the next person in line to enter it.

In the municipal context, my Office has found that a meeting does not violate the open meeting rules if the meeting is open to the usual number of persons, restricted only by the capacity of the room, and there is no evidence that there were unfair restrictions on

attendance.¹⁴ In a report to the municipality of The Nation, I encouraged council for the municipality to adopt the best practice of having a contingency plan to relocate meetings to a larger venue when it is apparent that a high level of public interest may result in greater numbers of people wishing to exercise their right to observe local government in process.¹⁵

The School Board knew that this meeting could potentially attract a significant number of attendees, and implemented a system whereby a new person was admitted to the meeting room each time someone left it. In addition, the School Board livestreamed the meeting, and people were able to access its Wi-Fi network to observe the meeting online. The School Board also posted signs and gave handouts to members of the public outside the Education Centre that contained both a QR code and a link to access the meeting's livestream. I am satisfied that this meeting did not violate the Act's open meeting requirements, as the meeting was open to the usual number of persons, restricted only by the capacity of the room, and there was no evidence to suggest that the School Board was responsible for any unfair restrictions on attendance.

Conclusion

My Office's review did not find any evidence to suggest that during the June 7, 2023 closed meeting, the Board discussed whether members of the public would be required to show identification at the June 20, 2023 meeting. Neither the *Education Act* nor the School Board's by-laws required the Board to provide information about the matters to be discussed in closed session.

Further, I am satisfied that the School Board's security measures for in-person attendance at the June 20, 2023 meeting were reasonable, given the safety concerns of the School Board. Finally, based on the available evidence, my review determined that the June 20, 2023 meeting was livestreamed.

¹⁴ *Clarence-Rockland (City of) (Re)*, 2015 ONOMBUD 1 at paras 43-44, online: <<https://canlii.ca/t/gtp5p>> and *The Nation (Municipality) (Re)*, 2016 ONOMBUD 6 (CanLII) at paras 37-38 [*The Nation*], <<https://canlii.ca/t/gt8dm>>.

¹⁵ *The Nation*, *supra* note 17 at para 45.





J. Paul Dubé, Ombudsman

I would like to thank the School Board for its co-operation during my review. You have confirmed that this letter will be included as correspondence at an upcoming Board of Trustees meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Dubé', written over a horizontal line.

Paul Dubé
Ombudsman of Ontario

Cc: Danny Di Lorenzo, Chair, Board of Trustees
via email: dannydilorenzo5@gmail.com

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**TO: NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
BOARD MEETING
MARCH 19, 2024**

PUBLIC SESSION

**TITLE: TRUSTEE INFORMATION
CALENDAR OF EVENTS – APRIL 2024**

APRIL 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 Easter Monday	2	3 SEAC Meeting	4	5	6
7	8 Elementary & Secondary PA Day	9 SAL Meeting Committee of the Whole Meeting	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 Growth & Retention AD Hoc Committee Meeting	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 Board Meeting	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				