



ST. JOHN CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2023 MINUTES

A. ROUTINE MATTERS - The meeting began at 6:00 pm

1. **Land Acknowledgement** - led by David Forte
2. **Opening Prayer** - led by David Forte.
3. **Roll Call:**

<u>Staff & Community Representatives:</u>	<u>Parent Representatives:</u>
David Forte (Principal) - P	Meaghan Anderson - P
Lauren Swindley (Teaching staff member) - P	Dan Belford - P
Elizabeth Bennie (Teaching staff member) - P	Sara Chirico - P
Sarah Dobrindt (Non-teaching staff member) - E	Marialba Cipriani - P
Andrew Natale (St. Joseph Parish representative) - E	Tina Colamartini - P
	John Del Col - P
	Lynn Dudok (Chair) - P
	Yolonda Holland - P
	Candace Manning-Ramage - P
	Samantha Michael - P
	Helen McNamara - P
	Lisa Milan - P
	Joanne Millar - P
	Marnie Odel - P
	Sarah Pekaruk - P
	Priscilla Prias-Molina - P
	Breeann Staibano (Co-Chair) - P
	Taylor Venneri - P
	Mariam Vieira - P
	Brian Violante - P
	Kimberlee Warburton - P

Those who have expressed their regrets:

- Sarah Dobrindt (Non-teaching staff member)
- Andrew Natale (St. Joseph Parish representative)

Early Departures:

- Breeann Staibano left the meeting at 7:40 pm
- Kimberlee Warburton left the meeting at 8:02 pm
- Joanne Millar left the meeting at 8:12 pm
- Mariam Vieira left the meeting at 8:25 pm
- Brian Violante left the meeting at 8:28 pm
- Elizabeth Bennie left the meeting at 8:30 pm

4. Approval of the Agenda - Agenda approved by Dan Belford; seconded by Brian Violante.
5. Disclosure of Interest - None.

B. PRESENTATIONS

1. Presentation of Bylaws - Mr. Forte reviewed the bylaws with the Catholic School Council Members. Taylor Venneri and Marialba Cipriani shared that they are employed by the Niagara Catholic District School Board.
2. Election of Chairperson - Lynn Dudok, Chairperson; Breeann Staibano, Co-Chairperson
3. Catholic School Council Annual Commissioning - All members participated actively in the Catholic School Council Annual Commissioning.

C. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Nil.

D. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

- 1) **Catholic School Council Fundraising Financial Report** Mr. Forte shared the Catholic School Council Fundraising Financial Reports (as of 26/09/2023).
- 2) [St. John Catholic School Google Website](#) - Families have been invited to access the school Google site, which contains daily information items for parents and students.
- 3) **St. John Spiritwear & Grade 8 GRAD Hoodies** - Spiritwear and Grade 8 Grad hoodies are sold through Maddalena Uniforms. All orders are made and submitted online via the Maddalena Uniforms website. The online store will remain open throughout the school year. Students are permitted to wear St. John spiritwear as part of the Elementary Standardized Dress Code.
- 4) **Thanksgiving Food Drive** - Our Thanksgiving Food Drive for *Community Care of West Niagara* will run from **September 25 - October 5**. Students are encouraged to bring in non-perishable items to support the cause.
- 5) **Annual Terry Fox Walk** - On **Friday, September 22**, students and staff at St. John Catholic Elementary School participated in our annual Terry Fox Walk in support of the Terry Fox Foundation. Students in grades 1-8 walked through the neighbouring subdivision West of the school. Kindergarten classes walked around the perimeter of the school. St. John raised **\$1,240** for the 2023 walk!
- 6) **Orange Shirt Day (Every Child Matters)** - Staff, students, and community members at St. John Catholic School are encouraged to wear the colour orange on **Friday, September 29th** as a visible symbol in support of the notion that *every child matters* and that we are all called to love, respect, and care for one another as children of God. Teaching and support staff continue to review the meaning of the day with students and explore the importance of respecting and loving one another as children of God.
- 7) **Halloween at St. John** - St. John students will participate in Halloween activities in their respective classrooms, as well as a **Dance-a-Thon** on **Tuesday, October 31**. Students may come to school dressed in Halloween costumes and are invited to remain in them for the duration of the day. Students are asked to bring a change of clothes, should they want or need to change out of their Halloween costume later in the day. Due to a number of students in our care who are anaphylactic to nuts, peanuts, and other sources of nuts, **only prepackaged snacks that are clearly labelled as 'nut-free' may be brought in to be shared among students**. Nutritional foods or other items (i.e. pencils, erasers, etc.) are encouraged. Further details will be communicated.

- 8) **School Lunch Days** - The school is currently working with *Subway*, *Pita Pit*, and *Little Caesars* to provide school lunch days to students. Lunch days continue to be scheduled on a monthly basis in an effort to avoid unforeseen conflicts that could occur. The school will consider an additional lunch day (i.e. Pasta Day) on months in which it will be feasible and if in compliance with The Board's Food & Beverage Policy, as well as the Ministry's Program/Policy Memorandum on School Nutrition Standards.
- 9) **Class Photos / Composites** - Parents will receive high a resolution digital version of class photos this year, which they can have printed on their own. The photography company can take a traditional class photo or create a class composite using the individual student photos. Parents would need to notify the school if they wish to not have their child's photo included on the composite or if they wish to not have their child in the traditional class photo. The Catholic School Council provided input regarding traditional class photos vs. class composites. The school will make a decision based on input received from the Catholic School Council, school staff, and Board's privacy advisor.
- 10) **Parent Engagement Funds** - The school has received an allotment of \$500.00 to use for parent engagement in an effort to support student achievement and well-being. Catholic School Council members are invited to work with the chairperson to discuss ideas for a parent engagement activity for St. John. Ideas need to meet the criteria outlined in the memorandum to discuss at our next meeting.
- 11) **School Fundraising:**
 - ✓ **Dance-a-Thons** - The St. John Student Council is planning to run Dance-a-Thon fundraisers during *October (Halloween)*, *February (Valentine's Day)*, and *June ('Surfs Up' theme)*. Families will be invited to make a small donation through 'SchoolCash' Online to support each fundraiser. Money raised will go toward school generated funds for the purchase of additional technology and other materials to support student learning and engagement.
 - ✓ **Wine Fundraiser (Fall/Winter)** - This will be a fundraiser run by the St. John Catholic School Council. Council members discussed options presented with input from staff. It was decided that the option that best suits the school is Henry of Pelham. Council members will work with the Chair/Co-Chair to initiate the fundraiser.

E. OTHER BUSINESS:

- 1) **Students Demonstrating Symptoms of Illness** - Parents and guardians of ill children displaying symptoms of COVID-19 are encouraged to contact Niagara Public Health and follow their advice. Anyone who is sick should stay at home until their symptoms have resolved for 24 hours (48 hours for gastrointestinal symptoms).
- 2) **Recesses at St. John** - As determined by the school's Joint Health & Safety Committee, St. John Catholic Elementary School will continue with its staggered recess schedule due to limited space on the playground. Students will continue to have access to the field for unstructured play during recesses as much as possible. Please know that use of the field is determined based on its condition following wet weather.
- 3) **Practice Fire & Lockdown Drills:**
 - ✓ **Fire drills** will be conducted at a minimum of six times throughout the duration of the school year, all at various times of the day.

- ✓ **Lockdown drills** will be conducted at a minimum of two times throughout the duration of the school year.
- 4) **Kiss n' Ride Drop-Off** - In an effort to keep our students and staff members safe, families are reminded that when using the Kiss n' Ride drop-off, drivers are asked to please **remain in their vehicle** and have child(ren) exit the vehicle directly onto the sidewalk when it is safe to do so. Supervising staff will be present in the parking lot at 9:10 am. Parents are kindly asked to please drop their child(ren) off **between 9:10 and 9:20 am**, but **no earlier than 9:10 am**. We also remind parents to refrain from parking in the bus lane at the far side of the lot. It is imperative that this lane remains clear for bus arrival.
 - 5) **Kiss n' Ride Pick-Up** - Parents are asked to please be at the school in a timely manner so students can be dismissed efficiently and without causing disruption to the flow of traffic on King Street.
 - 6) **Park & Pick-Up/Drop-Off** - Families of children in car seats who need park their vehicles and walk their children to the school sidewalk are asked to please be mindful of oncoming traffic, which includes busses and Kiss n' Ride vehicles. For their own safety, families are reminded of the importance of utilizing designated walkways to access the sidewalks.
 - 7) **Visitors to the School** - School visitors continue to be restricted out of an abundance of care and consideration for the health, safety, and privacy of students and school staff. Essential items that must be dropped off are to be labelled clearly and can be placed on the cart at the front entrance to be retrieved by a staff member.
 - 8) **Student Accident Insurance** - Parents are encouraged to consider obtaining student accident insurance. As a convenience to families, the Board has made an arrangement to offer student accident insurance through *insuremykids*®. Participation is voluntary but highly recommended and the costs are to be paid by the parent/guardian.
 - 9) **Niagara Catholic Virtual Learning Environment (NCVLE)** - The [NCVLE](#) will serve as the standard virtual platform for all classes throughout the Niagara Catholic District School Board. Classroom teachers continue to familiarize students with the platform.
 - 10) **Student Absences & Late Arrivals** - It is essential that all student absences and late arrivals are called into the Safe Arrival Program by **8:30 am** via phone (1-844-287-6287), website or app.
 - 11) **'SchoolMessenger'** - The school will continue to use the 'SchoolMessenger' platform to update the parent community with essential information pertaining to the school. Parents have been reminded to check the email account they have provided to the school frequently.
 - 12) **'SchoolCash' Online** - The use of this platform to make payments for school related expenses is highly encouraged. Further information is on the St. John Google Website.
 - 13) **Parish News:**
 - ✓ **Opening School Year Mass** - Father Rico led the school in an opening school year celebration of the Eucharist on September 13th at St. Joseph Parish. Students and staff were bussed to and from the Parish.
 - ✓ **First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion** - Parent meeting for St. John families was held at St. Joseph Parish on **Monday, September 25th at 6:00 pm**.

- ✓ **Confirmation** - Parent and candidate meeting for St. John families to be held at St. Joseph Parish on **Thursday, October 19th at 7:00 pm** (alternative date of Monday, October 23rd at 6:00 pm if families absolutely cannot make it).
- ✓ **Confirmation Preparation Program** - Andrew Natale, Youth Minister to work with Grade 8 students and teaching staff in class to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

14) **On-going School Initiatives:**

- ✓ Consideration of planting trees to provide a shade canopy near outdoor classroom and in the along the sides of the back field. Council members were invited to reach out to the school if they are familiar with an arborist or an organization in the area that the school can work with to fulfill this initiative.
- ✓ Continue to develop technological resources in the school with a goal of one Chromebook for every one student in Grades 1 through 8, and replacing non-functional Smartboards and LCD projectors with interactive TVs.

F. CHAIRPERSON REPORT:

- 1) **Wine Fundraiser (Fall/Winter)** - This will be a fundraiser run by the St. John Catholic School Council. Council members discussed options presented with input from staff. It was decided that the option that best suits the school is Henry of Pelham. Council members will work with the Chair/Co-Chair to initiate the fundraiser.
- 2) **Family Advent Mass** - This event will take place at St. Joseph Catholic Parish on **Monday, December 11** at **5:30 pm**. There will be a song performance put on by students in Kindergarten to Grades 3 following Mass. Light snacks and refreshments will be provided in the reception room following the Mass and song performance for those who wish to stay. Catholic School Council members and other parent volunteers to work with the Chair/Co-Chair to facilitate this family social gathering and secure light refreshments and snacks through donations.
- 3) **Niagara IceDogs Night** - Ms. Chirico shared with the Council details pertaining to the possibility of providing St. John families with the opportunity to attend a Niagara IceDogs game as a school. Details regarding potential dates and ticket purchases to be shared with the Principal.
- 4) **Family Movie Night** - The possibility of planning a Family Movie Night in the winter was proposed. Council members will share ideas for planning the event with the Chair/Co-Chair. Ideas will be discussed with the Principal for consideration to be included in the agenda for the next scheduled Catholic School Council Meeting.
- 5) **Family Fun Night (June)** - Catholic School Council would like to proceed with the possibility of running a 'Family Fun Night' at the school in June. Members to work with the Chair/Co-Chair to plan the event, pending availability of volunteers to satisfy activities and schedule. Members are welcome to share ideas for activities with the Chair/Co-Chair to be brought forward to the Principal for review and consideration. A date for the event, along with 'checkpoint' dates to be established at our forth-coming meeting.

G. REVIEW OF KEY DATES AND DATES OF INTEREST:

- ✓ Catholic School Council meetings will take place four times per year and will be held in-person in the school's Library Information Centre. If the Ontario Government decides that it is no longer safe to gather in-person, then meetings will be held virtually.
- ✓ **Meeting Dates (tentative):**
 - 1) Tuesday, September 26th

- 2) Tuesday, November 28th
- 3) Tuesday, February 27th
- 4) Tuesday, April 30th

✓ *Dates of Interest:*

- TBD First Holy Communion @ St. Joseph Catholic Parish
- TBD Confirmation @ St. Joseph Catholic Parish
- TBD Grade 8 Graduation

H. NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, November 28th, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.

I. ADJOURNMENT - the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 pm.

J. CLOSING PRAYER - led by David Forte