TO: **NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**
BOARD MEETING
SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

PUBLIC SESSION

TOPIC: **UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 8, 2026**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board receive the unapproved Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of September 8, 2026, as presented.

The following recommendations are being presented for the Board's consideration from the Committee of the Whole Meeting of September 8, 2026:

7.1.1 ***Niagara Compliance Audit Committee Report***

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Committee of the Whole recommend that Niagara Catholic District School Board continues as a joint participant in the Niagara Compliance Audit Committee, as presented.

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Committee of the Whole recommends to the Niagara Catholic District School Board the approval the Terms of Reference, as established (*Appendix 1*); as presented.

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Committee of the Whole recommends to the Niagara Catholic District School Board that the Secretary of the Board be delegated the authority to appoint members to the Niagara Compliance Audit Committee, as presented.

NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2026

Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee of the Whole of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, held on Tuesday, September 8, 2026 in the Father Kenneth Burns c.s.c. Board Room, at the Catholic Education Centre, 427 Rice Road, Welland.

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

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. ***Opening Prayer***

Opening Prayer was led by Trustee Benoit

2. ***Roll Call***

Vice-Chair Burkholder noted that all Trustees and Student Trustees were in attendance.

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				
Mason Pasma	✓			
Alan Sony	✓			

The following staff were in attendance:

Giancarlo Vetrone, Chief Executive Officer; **Kim Kinney,** Chief Education Officer; **Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells, Gino Pizzoferrato, Domenic Massi, Joseph Zaroda,** Superintendents of Education; **Rosa Rocca,** Chief Financial Officer; **Julia Tiessen,** Chief Human Resources and Communications Officer; **Anna Lisa Conidi**, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant, Corporate Services

3. ***Approval of the Agenda***

Moved by Trustee Marino

THAT the Committee of the Whole approve the Agenda of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of September 8, 2026 as presented.

CARRIED

4. ***Declaration of Conflict of Interest***

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

5. ***Approval of Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of June 9, 2026***

Moved by Trustee Joyner

THAT the Committee of the Whole approve the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of June 9, 2026, as presented.

CARRIED

6. ***Consent Agenda Items***

Trustee Huibers requested Item A6.1 2026-2027 Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants be held. This item was moved to Committee and Staff Reports Section C4 of the agenda.

6.1 ***2026-207 Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants***

Presented for information.

6.2 ***Staff Development Department Professional Development Opportunities***

Presented for information.

6.3 ***In Camera Items G1 and G4.1***

Moved by Trustee Di Lorenzo

THAT the Committee of the Whole adopt consent agenda items.

CARRIED

B. PRESENTATIONS

C. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

1. *CEO and Senior Staff Introduction to the 2026-2027 School Year*

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Vetrone provided background information and a corporate overview of the CEO and Senior Staff introduction to the 2026-2027 School Year. Chief Executive Officer Vetrone introduced Senior Administration Staff to provided further detailed information.

Chief Education Officer Kinney provided an Academic Overview. Chief Human Resources and Communication Officer Tiessen provided a Human Resources and Communications overview. Chief Financial Officer Rocca provided a Business and Financial Services overview. Superintended Pizzoferrato provided a K-12 Student Support Services and Special Education Overview. Superintendent Forsyth-Sells provided a Student Mental Health and Well-Being Overview. Superintendent Massi provided a Safe and Accepting School, Attendance and Elementary Staffing, and Public Health Partnership overview. Superintendent Zaroda provided a Secondary Education, Programs and Services overview.

The CEO and Senior Staff introduction to the 2026-2027 school year report was presented for information.

Chief Executive Officer Vetrone and Senior Administration Staff answered questions of the Trustees.

2. *Niagara Compliance Audit Committee Report*

Chief Executive Officer Vetrone presented the Niagara Compliance Audit Committee Report. Giancarlo Vetrone, Chief Executive Officer provided background information and highlighted the terms of reference for the Niagara Compliance Audit Committee report.

Chief Executive Officer Vetrone answered questions of the Trustees.

Moved by Trustee Joyner

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that the Niagara Catholic District School Board continues as a joint participant in the Niagara Compliance Audit Committee;

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommends to the Niagara Catholic District School Board the approval the Terms of Reference, as established (*Appendix 1*);

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommends to the Niagara Catholic District School Board that the Secretary of the Board be delegated the authority to appoint members to the Niagara Compliance Audit Committee.

CARRIED

3. Continuing Education/Summer School

Joe Zaroda, Superintendent of Education provided background information on the Continuing Education/Summer School program. Superintendent Zaroda introduced Marla Rapattoni, Principal of Continuing Education and Tara Vinc, Principal for the Summer School Program.

Ms. Rapattoni and Mrs. Vinc highlighted key components of the Continuing Education/Summer School program. The Continuing Education Summer School program was presented for information.

Superintendent Zaroda, Ms. Rapattoni and Mrs. Vinc answered questions of the Trustees.

4. *Consent Agenda Item A6.1 -2026-207 Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants*

Trustee Huibers asked questions regarding the cost of vulnerable sector checks and how it may create a barrier for parents who wish to volunteer in schools, particularly newcomers and families facing financial challenges. Superintendent Forsyth-Sells explained that Parent Reaching Out (PRO) funding is prescribed by the Ministry of Education and cannot be used to cover these costs. Trustees expressed concern that requiring parents to pay for checks may limit meaningful parental involvement. Superintendent Massi indicated that families are to speak with school Principals and request a letter from the school to be used to support their application.

Moved by Trustee Huibers
THAT the Committee of the Whole adopt 2026-2027 Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants.
CARRIED

5. *Monthly Updates*

5.1 *Student Trustees' Update*

Mason Pasma and Alan Sony, Student Trustees, presented a brief verbal update on the current activities of the Student Senate.

5.2 *Senior Staff Good News Update*

Senior Staff highlights included:

Superintendent Massi

- Superintendent Massi highlighted that today's school visits highlighted a very positive and exciting start to the school year. Across schools in Niagara Falls, classrooms were welcoming, students were engaged, and the buildings looked exceptional thanks to the extensive work completed by the Facilities team over the summer. The overall feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The cleanliness, ongoing improvements, and pride evident throughout our schools reflected the tremendous efforts of staff and contributed to a successful opening day.

D. GOVERNANCE POLICIES

1. *Governance Policies for Recommendation to the Board*

Nil to Report

2. *Governance Policies Prior to Vetting*

2.1. *Volunteer Recognition Policy (800.4)*

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells, presented the Volunteer Recognition Policy (800.4) prior to vetting.

- No amendment

The Committee of the Whole requested that the Volunteer Recognition Policy (800.4), be vetted from Sept 9, 2026 to October 20, 2026 with a recommended deadline for presentation to the Committee of the Whole in November for consideration to the Board in November.

2.2. *Retirement and Service Recognition Celebration Policy (201.2)*

Julia Tiessen, Chief Human Resources and Communications Officer, presented the Retirement and Service Recognition Celebration Policy (201.2) prior to vetting.

- No amendment

The Committee of the Whole requested that the Retirement and Service Recognition Celebration Policy (201.2), be vetted from September 9, 2026 to October 20, 2026 with a recommended deadline for presentation to the Committee of the Whole in November for consideration to the Board in November.

3. *Governance Policy Review Schedule*

Chief Executive Officer Vetrone presented the Governance Policy Review Schedule.

E. INFORMATION

1. *Trustee Information*

1.1 *2026-2027 School Calendar and Meeting Dates*

Chief Executive Officer Vetrone presented the 2026-2027 School Calendar and Meeting Dates.

1.2 *2026-2027 School Year System and Student Events*

Chief Executive Officer Vetrone presented the 2026-2027 School Year System and Student Events.

1.3 *2026-2027 Diocese of St. Catharines Calendar of Events*

Chief Executive Officer Vetrone presented 2026-2027 Diocese of St. Catharines Calendar of Events.

F. OTHER BUSINESS

1. *General Discussion to Plan for Future Action*

Nil reported

G. BUSINESS IN CAMERA

Addressed within consent agenda section.

H. REPORT ON THE IN-CAMERA SESSION

Moved by Trustee Di Lorenzo
THAT the Committee of the Whole report the motions from the In Camera Session of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of June 9, 2026.
CARRIED

SECTION B: STUDENT TRUSTEES EXCLUDED

Moved by Trustee Di Lorenzo
THAT the Committee of the Whole approve the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting - In Camera Session (Section B: Student Trustees Excluded) held on June 9, 2026 as presented.
CARRIED (Item G1)

Moved by Trustee Di Lorenzo
THAT the Committee of the Whole approve the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting - In Camera Session (Section B: Student Trustees Excluded) held on June 9, 2026 as presented
CARRIED (Item G4.1)

I. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Benoit
THAT the September 8, 2026 Committee of the Whole Meeting be adjourned.
CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Niagara Catholic District School Board held on **September 8, 2026.**

Approved on **October 13, 2026**.

Rhianon Burkholder Vice-Chair of the Board	Giancarlo Vetrone Chief Executive Officer Secretary/Treasurer

TO: **NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**
BOARD MEETING
SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

PUBLIC SESSION

TITLE: **NIAGARA COMPLIANCE AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board continues as a joint participant in the Niagara Compliance Audit Committee;

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board the approval the Terms of Reference, as established (*Appendix 1*);

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board that the Secretary of the Board be delegated the authority to appoint members to the Niagara Compliance Audit Committee.

Prepared by: Giancarlo Vetrone, Chief Executive Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

Presented by: Giancarlo Vetrone, Chief Executive Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

Recommended by: Giancarlo Vetrone, Chief Executive Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

Date: September 22, 2026

NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
SEPTEMBER 8, 2026

NIAGARA COMPLIANCE AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Compliance Audit Committee

Compliance Audit Committees are required under the *Municipal Elections Act*, *1996 (*MEA) for all local boards including Catholic school boards, to consider applications from eligible electors requesting audits of candidates, contributors, and registered third party campaign finances in relation to the 2026 Municipal Election, and any by-elections during the 2026-2030 term pursuant to the Municipal Elections Act.

Compliance Audit Committee (Municipal Elections Act) 88.37

(1) A council or local board shall establish a compliance audit committee before October 1 of an election year for the purposes of this Act. 2016, c. 15, s. 66.

Compliance Audit Committee (Municipal Elections Act) 88.37

(1) A council or local board shall establish a compliance audit committee before October 1 of an election year for the purposes of this Act. 2016, c. 15, s. 66

Composition

(2) The committee shall be composed of not fewer than three and not more than seven members and shall not include:

(a) <u>Employees or officers of the municipality or local board</u>;
(b) Members of the council or local board;
(c) Any persons who are candidates in the election for which the committee is established; or
(d) Any persons who are registered third parties in the municipality in the election for which the committee is established. 2016, c. 15, s. 66.

Eligibility for appointment

(3) A person who has such qualifications and satisfies such eligibility requirements as may be prescribed is eligible for appointment to the committee. 2016, c. 15, s. 66.

Same

(4) In appointing persons to the committee, the council or local board shall have regard to the prescribed eligibility criteria. 2016, c. 15, s. 66.

Term of office

(5) The term of office of the committee is the same as the term of office of the council or local board that takes office following the next regular election, and the term of office of the members of the committee is the same as the term of the committee to which they have been appointed. 2016, c. 15, s. 66.

Role of clerk or secretary

(6) The clerk of the municipality or the secretary of the local board, as the case may be, shall establish administrative practices and procedures for the committee and shall carry out any other duties required under this Act to implement the committee's decisions. 2016, c. 15, s. 66.

Costs

(7) The council or local board, as the case may be, shall pay all costs in relation to the committee's operation and activities. 2016, c. 15, s. 66.

Appendix 1 – Niagara Compliance Audit Committee Terms of Reference

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that the Niagara Catholic District School Board continues as a joint participant in the Niagara Compliance Audit Committee;

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommends to the Niagara Catholic District School Board the approval the Terms of Reference, as established (*Appendix 1*);

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommends to the Niagara Catholic District School Board that the Secretary of the Board be delegated the authority to appoint members to the Niagara Compliance Audit Committee.

Prepared by: Giancarlo Vetrone, Chief Executive Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

Presented by: Giancarlo Vetrone, Chief Executive Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

Approved by: Giancarlo Vetrone, Chief Executive Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

Date: September 8, 2026

Terms of Reference for Niagara Compliance Audit Committee

1. Authority

1. Sections 88.33 and 88.35 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (*Act*) provides that an elector who is entitled to vote in an election and believes on reasonable grounds that a candidate or a registered third party has contravened a provision of the Act relating to election campaign finances may apply for a compliance audit of the candidate's or registered third party's campaign finances, even if the candidate has not filed a financial statement.

2. Sections 88.34 and 88.36 of the *Act* requires the clerk to review the contributions reported on the financial statements submitted by a candidate or registered third party and report any contraventions of any of the contribution limits to the compliance audit committee.

3. Section 88.37 of the *Act* requires the council or local board, to establish a compliance audit committee before October 1st in an election year for the purposes of Sections 88.33 to 88.36 of the *Act* relative to a possible contravention of the election campaign finance rules.

2. Establishment of Committee

1. A Joint Compliance Audit Committee is established with the potential participants as set out below, and shall be named the "Niagara Compliance Audit Committee" ("Committee"):

   Local Area Municipalities": Town of Fort Erie, Town of Grimsby, Town of Lincoln, City of Niagara Falls, Town of Niagara on the Lake, Town of Pelham, City of Port Colborne, City of St. Catharines, City of Thorold, Township of Wainfleet, City of Welland and Township of West Lincoln
   "Region": Regional Municipality of Niagara
   "School Boards": District School Board of Niagara and Niagara Catholic District School Board.

2. The potential participants as set out in Section 1 above, shall each determine its participation in the Committee, the results of which shall form the "Joint Participants."

3. The Committee is a statutory committee.

3. References

1. The following municipal terms shall have a corresponding meaning for School Boards: municipality/board, Council/Board, Clerk/Secretary, responding municipality/responding board. Reference to Councils/Boards and Clerks shall be deemed to include those of the Joint Participants.

2. Responding municipality means the municipality/board responsible for the office, with the Region responsible for the offices of Regional Chair and Regional Councillors, municipalities responsible for the office of Mayor and Councillors/Aldermen and School Boards responsible for the office of trustees.

3. The local area municipalities shall receive the compliance audit applications on behalf of the Region and School Boards who will then immediately provide same to the Region or School Board to commence the compliance audit proceedings.

4. Term

1. The term of the Committee shall be concurrent with the term of Council. The term of appointment of the Committee members shall be December 1 of the regular election year to November 14 of the next regular election year, including any by-elections, or until such time as the applicable Committee has disposed of any remaining matters in accordance with the *Act*.

5. Duration

1. The Committee shall be established before October 1st in an election year.

2. The establishment of the Committee and terms of reference shall continue as set out herein from Council term to Council term unless determined otherwise by Council. However, the appointment of the members to the Committee shall be approved by each Council or delegated authority prior to October 1st in each election year.

6. Mandate

1. The mandate of the Committee is to hear and determine all applications filed in accordance with Sections 88.33 to 88.36 of the *Act* pursuant to the procedures established by the Clerks under the *Act*.

2. The powers and functions of the Committee as set out in Sections 88.33 to 88.36 of the *Act* include:
   (a) within 30 days of receipt of a compliance audit application from an elector, review and decide whether it should be granted or rejected;
   (b) if the application is granted, appoint an auditor licensed under the *Public Accounting Act, 2004* to conduct a compliance audit of the election campaign finances;
   (c) receive the auditor's report;
   (d) within 30 days of receipt of the auditor's report, consider the report and if the report concludes the candidate or registered third party appears to have contravened a provision of the *Act* relating to election campaign finances, decide whether legal proceedings against the candidate or registered third party for the apparent contravention shall be commenced, and
   (e) within 30 days after receipt of a report from any participating municipality's Clerk of any apparent over-contributions to candidates or registered third parties, the Committee shall consider the Clerk's report and decide whether legal proceedings against the contributor should be commenced.

7. <u>Composition</u>

1. The Committee shall be composed of a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of seven (7) members with membership drawn from the following stakeholder groups:
   (a) accountants or auditors with experience in preparing or auditing the financial statements of municipal candidates;
   (b) college or university professors with expertise in political science or local government administration;
   (c) legal profession with experience in municipal law, municipal election law or administrative law;
   (d) professionals who in the course of their duties are required to adhere to codes or standards of their profession which may be enforced by disciplinary tribunals, and
   (e) other individuals with knowledge of the campaign finance rules of the Act.

2. The Committee shall not include,
   (a) employees or officers of the Joint Participants;

(b) members of the Council or Board of the Joint Participants;
(c) any persons who are candidates in the election for which the Committee is established;
(d) any person who is or intends to volunteer or seek employment to assist any candidate or registered third party in the election for which the Committee is established, or
(e) any person who is a registered third party in any local area municipality.

3. When an application has been filed under Section 88.33 of the *Act*, only three (3) of the seven (7) members of the Committee shall comprise the Committee for the purposes of reviewing and considering the application.

4. The Clerk of the responding municipality shall determine the selection of the three (3) sitting members of the Committee from the pool of members based on availability.

8. Member Selection and Appointment

1. At a minimum, the recruitment of committee members shall be advertised in a local newspaper having general circulation and on the websites of the Joint Participants. Other recruitment measures may be initiated by the Clerks.

2. All persons interested in serving on the Committee shall complete an application form prescribed by the Clerks setting out their qualifications and experience.

3. A Nomination Committee consisting of a majority of the Clerks or designates, shall review the applications and submit a joint short list of candidates to the Councils/Boards, or Clerk as the delegated authority, for appointment approval.

4. In the event a vacancy occurs during the term, the municipality may rely on the remaining members to compose a Committee of three (3) members.

9. Selection Criteria

1. Without limiting the foregoing, members shall be selected on the basis of the following:
   (a) demonstrated knowledge and understanding of municipal election campaign finance rules;

(b) proven analytical and decision-making skills;
(c) experience working on a committee, administrative tribunal, task force or similar setting;
(d) availability and willingness to attend meetings;
(e) excellent oral and written communication skills.

10. Chair of Committee

1. The Committee members shall select a Chair from amongst its three (3) sitting members at its first meeting.

11. Secretary to Committee

1. The Clerk of the responding municipality shall act as Secretary to the Committee.

12. Compensation

1. Members of the Committee shall receive a retention honorarium of $300.00 including mileage, for attendance at a training session the costs of which shall be shared equally amongst the Joint Participants.

2. Members shall receive an honorarium of $200.00 per meeting, plus mileage, at the rate of the responding municipality.

13. Costs and Funding

1. The responding municipality shall fund and pay all costs associated with the Committee, including the retention of an auditor and any costs incurred as a result of a decision of the Committee being challenged to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice.

2. The Joint Participants shall equally share in the costs associated with advertising and training.

14. Auditor

1. The Area Clerks shall issue a joint RFP for auditor services and the Committee shall appoint an auditor.

15. Meetings

1. The Committee shall conduct its meetings in public but may deliberate in private.

2. The responding municipality's website shall be used to communicate meeting notices, agendas, minutes and decisions.

3. The Committee shall conduct its meetings in accordance with the responding municipality's Council Rules of Procedure By-law and the *Statutory Powers Procedures Act,* with modifications as deemed necessary.

16. Conflicts

1. Committee members shall comply with the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* and shall disclose a pecuniary interest to the Secretary in advance of any meeting, where possible or absent him/herself from meetings for the duration of the consideration of the application, discussion and voting with respect to the matter.

2. In the event a member discloses a pecuniary interest to the application in advance of the meeting, the Clerk of the responding municipality shall select another member to replace him/her on the Committee.

3. To avoid possible conflict of interest, an auditor or accountant appointed to the Committee must agree, in writing, not to undertake the audits or preparation of the financial statements of any candidate or registered third party seeking election to the Councils/Boards. Failure to adhere to this requirement shall result in the individual being removed from the Committee.

4. All Committee members shall agree, in writing, they will not work or volunteer for, or contribute to, any candidate or registered third party in any capacity in an election to the Councils/Boards. If upon being made aware that a member has participated or contributed to a campaign or registered third party, the Clerks or designates, by majority vote, shall remove the member from the roster or recommend to the Councils/Boards, or the delegated authority, to rescind the appointment to the Committee.

17. Practices and Procedures

1. The Clerk shall establish administrative practices and procedures for the Committee and shall carry out any other duties required under the *Act* to implement the Committee's decisions.

A7.2

TO: **NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**
BOARD MEETING
SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

PUBLIC SESSION

TOPIC: **APPROVED MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC) MEETING OF JUNE 3, 2026**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board receive the Approved Minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of June 3, 2026, as presented for information.

NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Approved

MINUTES OF THE
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

JUNE 3, 2026

Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee, held on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 6:30 p.m., at Saint Francis Catholic Secondary School, 541 Lake Street, St. Catharines, ON L2N 4H7

Superintendent Pizzoferrato called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. **Land Acknowledgement**
   Superintendent Pizzoferrato led the Land Acknowledgment

2. **Opening Prayer**
   Roxanne Royer led the opening prayer.

3. **Roll Call**

Members	**Affiliations**	Present In-person	Present Electronically	Excused	Absent
Jessica Thomas/ Cynthia Peterson	Autism Ontario Niagara Region		X		
Alyson Wilson/Melissa Sullivan	Bethesda Services	X			
Monique Somma (CHAIR)	Community Living (Pelham/Welland)	X			
Sara Wencel & DJ Holmes	Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet)	X			
Andrea Pede	Down Syndrome Niagara				X
Aishah Sonekan	Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara		X		
Erica Simmanivong-Elizarraras/ Katrina Arcand	Mainstream				X
Chris Tawil/Kylee Daley	Niagara Children's Centre				X
Michelle Toy	Pathstone	X			
Patricia Ferrie	Inclusion West Niagara	X			
Community Representative					
Krystine Donato			X		
Indigenous Representative					
Cindi Lee Ecker-Flagg				X	
Secondary Student Senate Representative					
Lucas Bishop			X		
Trustees					
Trustee, Natalia Benoit			X		
Trustee, Jim Marino		X			

The following staff were in attendance:

Gino Pizzoferrato, Superintendent of Education, Giancarlo Vetrone, Interim Director of Education, Jenna Young, Roxanne Rees, Nicole Royer, Grace Brochu, Lisa Clark, Ashley Prohaszka, Mikayla Lansbergen, Lori DiMatteo Marcella

4. Superintendent Pizzoferrato moved to amend the approved agenda by inserting "Special Education Funding Overview" by Superintendent Vetrone, as agenda item B1.
   Moved by: Trustee Marino
   Seconded by: DJ Holmes
   THAT the agenda be amended to insert the "Special Education Funding Overview"
   CARRIED

Approval of the Amended Agenda
Moved by: Trustee Marino
Seconded by: Michelle Toy
THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the amended agenda of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of June 3, 2026.
CARRIED

5. ***Declaration of Conflict of Interest***
No declarations of conflict of interest were declared with any item on the agenda.

6. Superintendent Pizzoferrato moved to amend the May 6, 2026 minutes by striking the motion to forward the SEAC letter in support of Trustees to the Board for final approval, and action on this item be postponed until September 2026
Moved by: Trustee Marino
Seconded by: DJ Holmes
THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee strike the motion from the May 6th meeting to forward a letter in support of Trustees to the board.
CARRIED

Approval of the Amended Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes of May 6, 2026
Moved by: Trustee Marino
Seconded by: DJ Holmes
THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approve the amended minutes of the Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of May 6th, 2026 as presented.
CARRIED

B. PRESENTATIONS

1. **Special Education budget and Core Education Funding – Superintendent Vetrone**

Superintendent Vetrone presented:

- An overview of key funding changes for the 2026-2027 Core Education

2. **Flourish Health Services –** *Sara Cauchon*

Sara Cauchon presented:

- The clinic is neurodiversity affirming and serves nearly 2000 clients annually. It offers professional development, over 30 year-round group programs, and comprehensive "whole child" psychoeducational and neurodevelopmental assessments.
- The multidisciplinary team includes psychologists, occupational therapists, social workers, speech-language pathologists, and a dietitian specializing in ARFID/selective eating.
- They partner with community organizations to provide reduced-fee and low-cost assessments to underserved youth.
- Their goal is to fill institutional service gaps, improve student mental health, bolster executive functioning and support neurodivergent students through critical developmental and academic transitions.

3. **Saint Francis Student Media Presentation –** *Saint Francis Students*

The students presented:

- The program is a hands-on, multi-year high school communications technology and media course that progresses in focus by grade level
- The production is highly collaborative and involves a large crew. A typical broadcast features a 12-person cast (split into two different groups) and 15 backstage/production roles.
- Students work with expensive, professional technology and learn to navigate distinct production environments, including a main production and a green screen area.
- The program teaches highly transferable life skills for post-secondary success.

C. POLICY REVIEW – *Superintendent Pizzoferrato*

Superintendent Pizzoferrato reported:

- Four policies up for review:
  - 201.16 - Attendance Support Program Policy
  - 201.11 - Employee Workplace Violence
  - 201.7 - Employee Workplace Harassment
  - 201.6 - Occupational Health and Safety

D. CHAIR'S REPORT- *Chair Somma*

No report.

E. AGENCY REPORTS

1. Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region – *Aishah Sonekan*

Aishah Sonekan reported:

- Updated toolkits and webinars are now available on the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) website to help parents, educators and professionals support individuals with learning disabilities.
- LDAO is offering a 7-to-10-hour, self-paced certificate course called "Learning Disabilities and ADHD 101: Foundations for Supporting Learning and Success".
    - It covers the impact on learning, behaviour, and well-being, and provides research-informed strategies. It can be taken standalone, or part of the three-part series.
    - The standard price is $200 but LDANR is offering a discount code to those who reach out to their team.
- Registration remains open for a 7-week online course for parents and caregivers, focusing on parent advocacy, building collaborative school relationships, and navigating IEPs.
- Standard registration spaces are still available for summer camp, and applications are open for fall program sessions.

2. Niagara Children's Centre – *Chris Tawil*

No report.

3. Pathstone Mental Health – *Michelle Toy*

No report.

4. Community Living (Port Colborne/Wainfleet) – *DJ Holmes*

No report.

5. **Inclusion West Niagara** – *Patricia Ferrie*

No report.

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

No report.

7. **Mainstream –** *Katrina Arcand*

No report.

8. **Bethesda Services –** *Melissa Sullivan/Alyson Wilson*

Melissa Sullivan reported:

- 2026 is the 25-year anniversary of children and youth services at Bethesda.
- Upcoming workshops:
  - Caregiver club – June 29th
  - Toilet training virtual workshop – June 17th
  - Transition to Adulthood workshop – starts June 2nd, runs weekly for 4 weeks
  - ACT – June group running, expanding into Hamilton and Haldimand-Norfolk regions, Grimsby location next.
  - Space still available to summer groups: Transition to Kindergarten, Transition to Highschool, Transition to Adulthood
- Register for all groups/workshops here: Free Summer Autism Services for Children & Youth | Bethesda Services — Bethesda Services

9. **Autism Ontario Niagara Region –** *Cynthia Peterson*

Cynthia Peterson reported:

- June 21st is a family event featuring a sensory-friendly screening of Toy Story 5 at the St. Catharines movie theatre.
- Summer Camp (July & August) – one to one support for campers
- Bowling events are currently ongoing through June to recognize and celebrate Autism Ontario volunteers.

10. **Community Living (Welland/Pelham)** – *Monique Somma*

No report.

F. COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE REPORT - *Krystine Donato*

No report.

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

Roxanne Rees (for Cindi) reported:

- The Student Voice Initiative is a bi-annual program for self-identified Indigenous students focused on building confidence and leadership through activities, elders and coordinators. The goal is to empower students to advocate for themselves and voice their concerns within their schools
- Family of Schools Cultural Presentations:
    - A pilot initiative where specific high school regions host mini cultural showcases. Elementary and secondary students come together to share their talents with the broader community.
    - The pilot just wrapped up for three high school communities (including Saint Michael and Saint Paul) and their surrounding elementary schools.
    - The board plans to pilot this initiative in three new high school communities next year.
- Lunch and Learn Program:
    - A program for self-identified high school students that connects them with local support organizations.
    - The program provides crucial practical and financial aid.

H. SECONDARY STUDENT SENATE REPRESENTATIVE REPORT- *Lucas Bishop*

Lucas Bishop reported:

- "Time to Shine" Special Education Formal was held in May at Saint Francis, hosted by the Student Senate and was a great success.
- "Mother Mary Baby Shower Initiative" is a board-wide donation drive that recently wrapped up across all eight secondary schools during the month of May.
    - Students were encouraged to bring in baby items and essentials to support vulnerable mothers.
    - All collected donations will soon be delivered to Strive Niagara to support local mothers in need.

I. STAFF REPORTS

1. Elementary Principal – *Susy Walsh*

No report.

2. Secondary Principal – *Nicole Royer and Roxanne Rees*

No report.

3. Student Support – *Superintendent Pizzoferrato*

Superintendent Pizzoferrato reported:

- Secondary Special Education Class IPRCs are taking place through the month of May and June as students and families prepare for this important transition to high school.
- Our next Student Support Session is taking place on June 9. The focus of the session will be on Prevalent Medical Plans of Care. Staff will have most of the day to learn how to complete the updated forms. We are also beginning the initial phases of using RISE to assist with these forms. Thank you to the Student Support Facilitators who are guiding this session.
- For the Professional Development day taking place on June 5, the Elementary Educational Assistants will have the opportunity to participate in virtual sessions hosted by Niagara College staff in both the Educational Assistance & Adult Support Program and the Autism and Behavioural Science program. The theme for the morning focuses on cultivating growth mindsets and building essential independence in our students. In the afternoon, members of our Student Support Department – ABA team, Speech-Language Pathologists and Student Support Facilitators will be offering virtual sessions to support transition and communication skills. Similar planning for the Secondary EA's is in progress. We extend a thank to our Niagara College community partners and Student Support teams for providing this valuable opportunity.
- Kindergarten transition meetings are wrapping up this month. Student Support staff have been involved in numerous transitions to assist students/families with a successful transition to kindergarten. Our staff will continue to support schools and monitor students in the Fall with recommendations and strategies for a successful start. Niagara Catholic looks forward to any new families who also join our schools in September.
- KeyMath3 assessment training was held for select schools with Educational Resource Teachers from those locations participating in a half-day training session to support mathematics programming. A further implementation and ERT training for this resource is planned for September.
- Empower lessons may be completed or coming to an end in most elementary schools. Empower teachers will be closing the program for this school year and considering candidates for their next Empower group in 2026-2027.
- Lexia will be made available to students with a license throughout the summer months. A memo will be distributed shortly to school principals regarding this information and can also distribute a letter to families for their awareness

4. Superintendent Pizzoferrato – *Gino Pizzoferrato*

Superintendent Pizzoferrato reported:

- Appreciation for the committee, its members, and the work done on SEAC.

J. TRUSTEE REPORTS - *Trustee Marino/Trustee Benoit*

Trustee Marino reported:

- The opportunities Trustees have had to visit schools and experience athletic events, scholarship awards and artistic showcases.
- Upcoming events include a retirement recognition dinner and graduation ceremonies.

K. NIAGARA CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

1. Catholic School Council Funding Applications

For the 2025-2026 school year Catholic School Councils had the opportunity to apply for additional funding to support parent engagement activities. Fifteen elementary and 3 secondary Catholic School Councils received additional funding to support parent engagement activities focusing on Internet Safety, Raising Resilient Students, Mental Health Workshops-Stress Reduction, Digital Reset for Parents and guest speakers to promote Black History Month.

2. Niagara Catholic Student and Family Support Office-September 2026

The Ontario government announced that it is requiring all school boards in the province to establish a "Student and Family Support Office", with the purpose of providing parents/guardians/caregivers with a mechanism to escalate concerns and resolve complaints. The establishment of "Student and Family Support Offices" in school boards forms part of the government's broader accountability agenda as articulated in Bill 33, *Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025.*

The "Student and Family Support Office" will serve as an additional resource for families after the initial engagement with their child's teacher or school principal.

The "Niagara Catholic Student and Family Support Office" will be established by September 1, 2026.

Niagara Catholic will ensure that the office meets the following service standards:

1. to acknowledge any inquiries within two business days, and
2. to aim to provide a response to inquiries within five business days

3. Niagara Catholic Student Achievement Plan

The updated Niagara Catholic Student Achievement Plan is available to all parents/guardians on the Board website, under the Board tile, Reports, Strategic Plans and System Priorities, Board Planning.

4. Niagara Catholic Volunteers AOP (800.9)

The Niagara Catholic *Volunteering in Catholic Schools AOP (800.9)* and the Niagara Catholic *Volunteer Drivers AOP (302.4)* were amalgamated into one AOP entitled *Niagara Catholic Volunteers AOP (800.9)*.

The new requirements for Niagara Catholic volunteers were distributed to all principals and vice-principals to share with all staff, Catholic School Councils and school communities.

1. Niagara Catholic volunteers will be required to provide an original and satisfactory Police Vulnerable Sector Check, dated within six months of submission on a 5-year renewable cycle. In subsequent years, volunteers will be required to sign and submit a Volunteer Offence Declaration by September 1. The offence declaration will stand as a legally binding document, in accordance with Regulation 521/01, as amended by Regulation 298/25.

2. Niagara Catholic volunteers are now required to complete a one-time training on accessibility, and provide proof of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Certificate of Training and the Ontario Human Rights Commission Certificate of Completion, in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Commission: Working Together Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

5. NCPIC Meeting Dates 2026-2027 are as follows:

- September 10, 2026
- November 5, 2026
- January 7, 2027
- March 11, 2027
- May 6, 2027

L. NEW BUSINESS/AGENDA ITEMS

No report.

M. NEXT MEETING: Wednesday September 9, 2026 at 6:30 p.m., at the Catholic Education Centre.

N. CLOSING PRAYER/MOMENT OF SILENCE: Grace Brochu led the closing prayer.

O. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Michelle Toy
Seconded by: DJ Holmes
THAT the June 3, 2026 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee be adjourned.
CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

TO: **NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**
BOARD MEETING
SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

PUBLIC SESSION

TITLE: **MINUTES OF THE NIAGARA CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE (NCPIC) MEETING OF MAY 7, 2026**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board receive the Minutes of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (NCPIC) Meeting of May 7, 2026 as presented for information.

NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF THE
NIAGARA CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

MAY 7, 2026

Minutes of the Meeting of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee, held on Thursday, May 7, 2026 at 6:30 p.m., in the Father Kenneth Burns csc Board Room, at the Catholic Education Centre, 427 Rice Road, Welland, ON.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reminded all those in attendance that the meetings of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee are recorded, livestreamed and posted on the Board website.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. *Land Acknowledgement and Opening Prayer*

Fr. Paul MacNeil led the Land Acknowledgement and Opening Prayer.

2. *Roll Call*:

Parent Members	Present In-person	Present Electronically	Excused	Absent
Brenda Annen				√
Julie Bateman	√			
Rose Heron	√			
Sara Ivicic	√			
Michael McKnight	√		√	
Laura Thomas				
Carrie Vernelli	√			
Bishop/Diocesan Representative				
Fr. Paul MacNeil	√			
Ontario Association for Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE)				
Jennifer Pilzecker				√
Secondary Student Senate Representative				
Ella Colaneri		√		
Trustees				
Joe Bruzzese	√			
Larry Huibers	√			

The following staff attended:
Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells, Superintendent of Education, **Chris McLean**, Secondary Vice-Principal, **Yvonne Anderson**, Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary.

Regrets Received: Laura Thomas and Maria Solomon

3. ***Approval of the Agenda***
Moved by: Carrie Vernelli
THAT the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee approve the agenda of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of May 7, 2026 as presented.
CARRIED

4. ***Declaration of Conflict of Interest***
No declarations of conflict of interest were declared with any item on the agenda.

5. ***Approval of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting Minutes of January 8, 2026***
Moved by: Michael McKnight
THAT the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee approve the minutes of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of January 7, 2026 as presented.
CARRIED

B. POLICY

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that the following policies are currently being vetted.

1. Attendance Support Program Policy (201.16)
2. Employee Workplace Harassment Policy (201.7)
3. Employee Workplace Violence Policy (201.11)
4. Occupational Health and Safety (201.6)

- Feedback to be submitted on behalf of the NCPIC is to be sent to Yvonne Anderson, no later than 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 27, 2026.

- Feedback that is being submitted as an individual is to be sent directly to Anna Lisa Conidi, no later than 12:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 28, 2026.

C. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESIGNATE, SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported:

1. Ministry of Education: Conversation with PIC Chairs/Co-Chairs and Board Leads-January 22, 2026
   - Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025-PowerPoint Presentation
   - Ontario.ca: Helping Parents Navigate Public Education-PowerPoint Presentation

   Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that on January 22, 2026 the Ministry of Education held a virtual meeting with PIC Chairs/Co-Chairs and Board Leads. The Ministry of Education presented two presentations. The links to the presentations have been included in the agenda for information.

2. School Mental Health Ontario: Free webinars for parents/caregivers-March 2026
   Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that on February 10, 2026, a system memo was shared with the elementary and secondary principals, vice-principals, Catholic School Council Chairs/Co-Chairs and the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee.

The memo was to bring awareness to the School Mental Health-Ontario four-part parent/caregiver webinar series focusing on key mental health and substance use health topics identified by parents/caregivers in Ontario, hosted by School Mental Health-Ontario.

Sessions started in March, will continue until June and are available on the By Your Side Learning Hub.

3. Catholic School Council Funding Applications
   Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that 15 elementary and 3 secondary Catholic School Councils have applied for, and received additional funding to support parent engagement activities focusing on Internet Safety, Raising Resilient Students, Mental Health Workshops-Stress Reduction, Digital Reset for Parents and guest speakers to promote Black History Month.

4. Niagara Catholic Student and Family Support Office-September 2026
   Superintendent Forsyth-Sells shared on November 13, 2025, the Ontario government announced that it is requiring all school boards in the province to establish a "Student and Family Support Office", with the purpose of providing parents/guardians/caregivers with a mechanism to escalate concerns and resolve complaints. The establishment of "Student and Family Support Offices" in school boards forms part of the government's broader accountability agenda as articulated in Bill 33, *Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025.*

   The "Student and Family Support Office" will serve as an additional resource for families after the initial engagement with their child's teacher or school principal.

   The "Niagara Catholic Student and Family Support Office" will be established by September 1, 2026.

   Niagara Catholic will ensure that the office meets the following service standards:

   1. to acknowledge any inquiries within two business days, and
   2. to aim to provide a response to inquiries within five business days

5. Niagara Catholic Student Achievement Plan
   Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that the updated Niagara Catholic Student Achievement Plan is available to all parents/guardians on the Board website, under the Board tile, Reports, Strategic Plans and System Priorities, Board Planning.

6. Niagara Catholic Volunteers AOP (800.9)
   Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that the Niagara Catholic *Volunteering in Catholic Schools AOP (800.9)* and the Niagara Catholic *Volunteer Drivers AOP (302.4)* were amalgamated into one AOP entitled *Niagara Catholic Volunteers AOP (800.9)*.

   The new requirements for Niagara Catholic volunteers were distributed to all principals and vice-principals to share with all staff, Catholic School Councils and school communities. Superintendent Forsyth-Sells highlighted key changes:

   1. Niagara Catholic volunteers will be required to provide an original and satisfactory Police Vulnerable Sector Check, dated within six months of submission on 5-year

renewable cycle. In subsequent years, volunteers will be required to sign and submit a Volunteer Offence Declaration by September 1. The offence declaration will stand as a legally binding document, in accordance with Regulation 521/01, as amended by Regulation 298/25.

2. Niagara Catholic volunteers are now required to complete a one-time training on accessibility, and provide proof of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Certificate of Training and the Ontario Human Rights Commission Certificate of Completion, in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Commission: Working Together Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

   A brief Q&A followed.

7. 2026-2027 NCPIC Membership: Call for Nominations
   Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that on March 10, 2026 a system memo was shared with elementary and secondary principals, vice-principals and Catholic School Council Chairs/Co-Chairs and the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee.

   The memo was to inform parents/guardians that the Niagara Catholic District School Board is seeking to appoint up to three community representatives and to fill the available parent/guardian positions on the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee for the 2026-2027 school year.

   The memo included:
   - A Newsletter Insert
   - The 2026-2027 NCPIC Nomination Form for Parents/Guardians
   - The 2026-2027 NCPIC Community Representative Application Form

   Interested parents/guardians are to complete and submit the parent/guardian nomination form ***no later than 4:00 p.m., on Friday, May 15, 2026***. Nomination forms are available at the school and on the Board website, under the Parent Tile-Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee.

8. 2026-2027 School Year Calendar
   Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that the 2026-2027 School Year Calendar approved by the Ministry was approved by the Board at the April 28, 2026, Board meeting. The 2026-2027 School Year Calendar is posted on the Board website under the Parent tile.

9. 2026-2027 NCPIC Meeting Dates
   Superintendent Forsyth-Sells shared the 2026-2027 NCPIC Meeting Dates.
   - September 10, 2026
   - November 5, 2026
   - January 7, 2027
   - March 11, 2027
   - May 6, 2027

10. NCPIC Financial Report
    Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported on the finances of the NCPIC.

D. SECONDARY STUDENT SENATE REPRESENTATIVE REPORT-*Ella Colaneri*

Ella Colaneri reported:

- All Niagara Catholic secondary schools are heading into the summer months, proms are coming up and there are many exciting things happening for graduates.

  Currently, secondary schools are participating in 'Mother Mary's Baby Shower' started by Student Senate that will continue until May 26. This is a donation drive fundraiser that will allow us to support young women and mothers in need during the month of May. Donations such as non-perishable food, hygiene products, diapers, and new clothing will be accepted and given to STRIVE Niagara at the end of the month by the Niagara Catholic Student Senators.

- This week, elementary school councils and senators were able to participate in the annual leadership symposium held by Student Senate. All elementary school students were able to communicate with each other, outside of their schools and in an environment with like-minded student leaders. It allowed students in younger grades to observe the communications and relationships that will enhance their interpersonal skills in secondary and post-secondary life. This annual conference enhanced students' togetherness, creativity, knowledge about equity, and all students left inspired and ready to lead their schools.

- The Niagara Catholic Student Senate just held our annual symposium conference with the theme focused on equity and solidarity, paralleling Lead Out Loud and going more in depth for all councils and senators in our board. This event was highly anticipated and held great success once again for our senate. It taught us as senators how we can lead with solidarity, and how we can teach those skills in our future school leaders as well.

- Niagara Catholic senators are holding the "Time to Shine" Special Education semi-formal on May 15. The theme this year is "Diamonds and Disco". Special Education students from every school are invited to enjoy a day of fun, laughter, and creativity at Saint Francis Catholic Secondary School. We are beyond excited to hold this event and are looking forward to seeing everyone shine.

E. DIOCESAN REPORT- *Fr. Paul MacNeil*

Fr. Paul MacNeil reported:

- The St. Carlos Acutis Project: Innovation in Faith
  Niagara Catholic students were invited to participate the St. Carlos Acutis Challenge, to create a project that highlighted the aspects of Catholic faith that they are passionate about and share it in a way that is engaging and effective using modern technology to share the Light of the Gospel.

  32 submissions were received and showcased on Saturday, May 2, 2026 at Denis Morris Catholic High School. The level of creativity and ingenuity shown by the students in documenting and presenting various aspects of our Catholic faith was truly moving, proving that technology can be used as a powerful tool for connection and spiritual growth. The project successfully modeled how our young people can be "Digital Missionaries", following in the footsteps of a Saint who spoke their language. A video of the event was also presented.

- Diocesan Stewardship: Investing in the Future
  The Diocese is currently in the midst of a significant "Light the Way Fundraising Campaign" specifically designed to bolster the frontline efforts of parishes around "Evangelization" and Youth Ministry.

- Strengthening the Parish-School Connection
  The final draft of a new guiding document focused on Parish-School Relationships has been completed. This document provides clear, thoughtful guidelines to enhance the collaboration between the Diocese parishes, pastors and schools. By aligning expectations and communication strategies we ensure that students and families experience a unified community of faith. It moves relationships from a series of "transactions" to a true "partnership in mission".

  These guidelines will serve as a foundational tool for pastors and school leadership to deepen their connection and support for one another. The document has already been approved by senior staff at the board level and local deans and will be presented to the Council of Priests on May 20, 2026. The document will be made public once final approval has been received from Bishop Bergie and Director Cipriano.

F. ONTARIO ASSOCIATION FOR PARENTS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION REPORT

Nil report.

G. SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC) REPORT

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells provided a report on behalf of SEAC highlighting:

- May is Speech and Hearing Month
- Elementary Gifted Education Modules: "How We Communicate"
- Student Support Symposium
- Spring Fling Event-Saint Michael and Saint Paul Catholic High Schools
- Netherlands Visit

A handout was provided with further details.

H. STAFF REPORTS-*Maria Solomon and Chris McLean*

Secondary Vice-Principal, McLean provided the elementary report on behalf of Principal Solomon:

1. <u>Formation and Religious Observances:</u>
   Faith-based learning is embedded throughout each day which is highlighted during this week of Catholic Education. Schools across Niagara Catholic collectively focused on celebrating faith, community, and student well-being through integrated learning experiences. This was demonstrated by:

   - Deepening faith and Catholic identity through daily prayer, liturgies, saints' teachings, and sacramental celebrations
   - Promoting student voice and leadership via performances such as" Niagara Catholic's Musical Festival, school assemblies, symposiums such as the Student Leadership, and recognition of student and staff achievement though Niagara Catholic's Celebrating Excellence Awards Ceremony.
   - Engaging in community and service activities that foster connection, outreach, and social justice awareness

- Integrating mental health and well-being practices such as mindfulness, reflection, and wellness activities into daily routines
- Highlighting holistic education by combining faith formation, academics, arts, and physical activity into a unified celebration of learning

Elementary schools also regularly attend monthly school masses reinforcing parish-school connections and significant liturgical celebrations and sacraments supporting student spiritual growth. Faith development remains continuous and highly integrated into school programming, aligning with the Catholic identity of the school community.

2. Academic Programming and Assessment continues to be a focus:
    - EQAO Assessments will begin later this month along with a continued focus on using a three-tiered approach to support student learning.

3. Kindergarten Open Houses and school transitions are scheduled during the month of May.

    - Student Well-Being and School Climate include numerous initiatives aimed at fostering inclusion, wellness, and positive school culture such as:

      Mental Health Week (May 3–8) emphasized student wellness.
      - Awareness events including:
      - Pink Shirt Day (anti-bullying) in February
      - Epilepsy Awareness (March)
      - Down Syndrome Awareness (March)

      Community-building initiatives:
      - Kids Helping Kids Week (February)
      - Faith Play Day (May).

    Schools throughout Niagara Catholic demonstrate an ongoing commitment to inclusivity, empathy, and student well-being through targeted awareness campaigns and community-building events.

4. Indigenous Education and Equity Initiatives
   Schools continue to prioritize Indigenous education and culturally responsive programming:
    - Multiple visits by Niagara Catholic Indigenous teams and participation in the Circle of Friends Pilot Programs
    - Niagara Catholic Indigenous Youth Gatherings (Grade 7 students in April)
    - Learning opportunities centered on Indigenous teachings and community engagement occurred across several months. Indigenous perspectives were meaningfully integrated through recurring visits, experiential learning, and student participation in regional initiatives.

5. Environmental and Eco Initiatives
   Environmental stewardship was strong and consistent. At the end of this week, the ECO Schools Applications are due.

6. Extracurricular Activities and Athletics
   A wide range of athletic and extracurricular opportunities were offered:

- Basketball tournaments (intermediate and junior levels) in March
- Handball tournaments (April)
- Track and Field event at Oakes Park (May)
- Flag Football (May)

Additional activities:

- Chess Tournament (March)
- Boccia Ball and musical participation (May)
- Students had access to diverse physical, competitive, and skill-based experiences that supported teamwork and engagement beyond the classroom.

7. Community, Family, and Outreach Engagement: The school maintained strong partnerships with families and the wider community through:
    - Catholic School Council meetings
    - Parent engagement events
    - Kindergarten orientation sessions and open houses
    - Fundraising and outreach

Secondary Vice-Principal, McLean provided the secondary report:

- OSSLT ended April 20. All first time eligible and 2nd attempts were completed for the 2025-2026 school year. Results will be available by the end of May.
- Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics window for writing is from Thursday, May 28 to Wednesday, June 24, 2026.
- The COMPASS Survey was administered during March and April. Questions in the survey dealt with different health topics including: physical activity, healthy eating, smoking, alcohol and drug use, sedentary behaviour, and mental health. The COMPASS survey will help researchers from the University of Waterloo to gather information about health topics among Canada's youth. The information is used to help plan new initiatives and evaluate current programs at our secondary schools.
- Midterm reports went out during the week of April 20, followed by Parent-Teacher Interviews which concluded at the end of April. Parent-Teacher Interviews offer a great opportunity for parents to meet their child's teachers and connect over their academic achievements.
- Catholic Education Week and Mental Health Week
    - Many events occur during this week from school masses, liturgies, and wellness fairs.
    - OCSTA (Ontario Catholic Student Youth Day) occurred on May 6th for Grades 7-12 students. All students in grades 7-12 were invited to attend and participate in this year's virtual event. Guest speaker topics dealt with Balancing the Heart & Mind and "Pilgrims of Hope: Sowers of Seeds" along with a Provincial Mass celebrating CEW.
    - Elementary and secondary schools, under the leadership of the Child and Youth Worker(s), were asked to promote, and participate in the CEW and Mental Health Week contest using the theme of "Pilgrims of Hope on the Path to Holiness" answering the question, "How Will You Be a Messenger of Hope?" Students shared how hope and faith inspire them and positively impact their health and well-being. All submissions must be sent to mentalhealth@niagaracatholic.ca by Friday, May 29.

- SKILLS Ontario was held in Toronto on May 4 and 5. Many participants from Niagara Catholic competed in the events. One notable mention from Denis Morris Catholic High School was Alessandra Maddalena, who won gold in hairstyling. Alessandra will be moving on to Nationals held in Toronto on May 28-29.
- Every year during Catholic Education Week, Niagara Catholic recognizes the very best of our students, staff, and alumni during our Celebrating Excellence Awards. The awards were presented on May 5, at the Central Community Centre in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The awards celebration takes place in three parts: the Distinguished Alumni Awards, recognizing graduates who have a notable contribution to their field or the community, the Inspiration Awards, presented to staff for exemplary service to their students, colleagues, and Niagara Catholic, and the Catch the Spirit Student Awards of Excellence, presented each year to a student from each Niagara Catholic elementary and secondary school, as well as from alternative education and continuing education.
- Niagara Catholic Athletic Association is hosting their Track and Field Championship on Wednesday, May 13, at the Niagara Olympic Club.
- The Nationals Musicfest Canada is being held in Niagara Falls from May 11-15. Many of our secondary schools will be competing. Schedules can be found at www.musicfest.ca

I. TRUSTEE REPORT

Trustee Huibers reported:

- The Ontario Catholic School Trustee Association Conference was held last weekend Chair Di Lorenzo and Vice-Chair Burkholder attended along with the Director of Education and student trustees. Obviously, the impact of the new legislation was a concern and a consideration, not to make it a political conversation, but relative to this group, I would be concerned to ensure that the policy approval process does honour the local engagement and has that ability rather than centralizing it to a ministerial level and losing the local conversations. Secondly, would be the role of the student trustees. We have been very blessed at this board to have very, strong student trustee representation that adds immensely to the organization and activities and focus of the Trustees, as well as senior staff. I would want to ensure that doesn't get lost in the movement towards whatever this new legislation is as the devil will be in the details and it will be a matter of understanding how that goes.

- The Niagara Catholic Foundation held its Catholic Education Award of Distinction and our own Jim Marino, current trustee and also long-time Catholic advocate, as well as posthumously Joe McDonald, who was an OECTA President locally, were recognized for contributions to Catholic education.

- There is an Area Attendance Review going on in Niagara Falls currently the for realignment of school attendance areas based on three factors:

    - the French Immersion program and where to allocate that space, and best utilize that space
    - what happens when the new school at Niagara Falls comes on board?
    - the degree of overcrowding and underutilization across the Niagara Falls sector

There have been a number of meetings. There will be two more public meetings, one on May 11, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. at Saint Michael Catholic High School, and then again on May 19, 2026 at Saint Paul Catholic High School. A recommendation will be presented to the Committee of the Whole on June 9, for implementation. It's anticipated that the implementation would be for the following academic year, not for September 2026, but September 2027. Some of that may be in flux dependent upon the success of getting the new school in place. If anyone has any input, they are welcome to provide input at those meetings, and the information is also available online.

J. NEW BUSINESS/AGENDA ITEMS-DISCUSSION FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) is offering free webinars for parents/guardians. The information was shared with principals and vice-principals to share with Catholic School Councils and school communities. Superintendent Forsyth-Sells highlighted the date and topics. A handout was provided with further details.

May 13, 2026, 6:30 p.m.: EQAO Math Night for Parents and Guardians (Grades 3, 6 and 9 assessments)
May 20, 2026, 12:00 p.m.: EQAO Math Sessions for Parents and Guardians of Grade 9 students
June 3, 2026, 6:00 p.m.: EQAO Literacy Session for Families-Focus on Reading
June 9, 2026, 6:00 p.m.: Screen Time & Academic Achievement on EQAO Assessments
June 11, 2026, 12:00 p.m.: EQAO Literacy Session for Families-Focus on Reading

K. NEXT MEETING: Thursday, September 10, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. at the Catholic Education Centre. This will be the first meeting of the 2026-2027 school year.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells acknowledged Carrie Vernelli for her commitment and dedication to Catholic education over the past 14 years, as a parent, Catholic School Council member and parent representative on the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee.

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells also thanked all members of the NCPIC for their dedication and support of Catholic education, parent engagement and student achievement in the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

L. CLOSING PRAYER: Fr. Paul MacNeil led the closing prayer.

M. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Carrie Vernelli

THAT the May 7, 2026 meeting of the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee be adjourned.

CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.