



MINUTES



DENIS MORRIS CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday March 18, 2025
6:30 P.M. Denis Morris Information Centre

Present: K. Timmins, E. Farkas, A. Natale, D. Scullion, M. Vandervaat, T. Kramar, S. Strickland, M. Hebert, K. Forster.

Regrets: D. Williams, M. Rocco. L. Graham

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

- 1 Opening Prayer – A. Natale
- 2 Roll Call
- 3 Approval of Agenda – March 18,, 2025: 1st: T. Kramar 2nd: S. Strickland
- 4 Disclosure of Conflict of Interest: NIL
- 5 Approval of the Minutes – January 14, 2025: 1st: D. Scullion 2nd: M. Vandervaat

B. PRESENTATIONS

- Field Trips:
 - 1) Tour of the new High Performance Centre which is almost complete.
 - 2) Visit “DM High Voltage” First Robotics Team

C. POLICIES FOR VETTING

- None

D. PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

- 1 **NCPIC (Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee) Report:** K. Timmins

NCPIC – March 6 Meeting

- **Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education Gala**

Superintendent Forsyth-Sells reported that the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education with Honorary Guest, Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, Bishop of the Diocese of St. Catharines, and the presentation of the Niagara Catholic Award of Distinction will take place on Thursday, March 27, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at Club Roma in St. Catharines.

Niagara Catholic is pleased to announce that former trustees and Board Chairs, Kathy Burtnik and Frank Fera, and retired Director of Education John Crocco, are the 2025 recipients of the Niagara Catholic Education Award of Distinction. Kathy Burtnik, Frank Fera, and John Crocco will join a long list of exceptional contributors to Niagara Catholic and Catholic education in Ontario and in Canada. They will also be recognized on the Niagara Catholic Wall of Distinction.

Tickets are still available for the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education’s Annual Benefit Gala. You can purchase tickets through the link on the Foundation Gala banner on the Board website.

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

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

Key topics in the Parent/Caregiver Learning Hub include:

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

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

- Development and Peace — Caritas Canada is responding to this call through the global Turn Debt into Hope ShareLent campaign. A mini-magazine to is available to use during Lent describes the teaching of debt forgiveness in a jubilee year, as well as some information on some of the 79 projects supported by Development and Peace in 34 countries throughout the world. Inside there is also a solidarity calendar to use as part of your Lenten journey.
- Thursday, March 27 - Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education Annual Benefit Gala 6:00 p.m. at Club Roma. Tickets are \$100.00 per person payment due by March 18th.
- Saturday, April 5-Confession is available in all of our parishes from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- A note on the meaning of fast and abstinence:
 - **Can.1251** Abstinence from meat, or from some other food as determined by the Episcopal Conference, is to be observed on all Fridays, unless a solemnity should fall on a Friday. Abstinence and fasting are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.
 - **Can.1252** The law of abstinence binds those who have completed their fourteenth year. The law of fasting binds those who have attained their majority (age 18 – C.97), until the beginning of their sixtieth year. Pastors of souls and parents are to ensure that even those who by reason of their age are not bound by the law of fasting and abstinence, are taught the true meaning of penance. The law of abstinence forbids the use of meat, but not of eggs, the products of milk or condiments made of animal fat.
- The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' 2025 Journey through Lent video series, which includes reflections on the readings for Ash Wednesday and each Sunday in Lent including Palm Sunday, is now available on the CCCB website: English: <http://www.cccb.ca/lent> and in French: <http://www.cecc.ca/careme>. This series is designed for individuals, families, and communities, providing spiritual inspiration and guidance on how to prepare for the Easter Season. It is a joint project between three CCCB offices (the Office national de liturgies, the National Liturgy Office, and the Office for Evangelization and Catechesis).
 - Superintendent Forsyth-Sells share that the the Serra Club of St. Catharines Promoting Catholic Vocation is hosting a Murder Mystery Dinner to support vocations. A flyer with further details has been included in the package.

MURDER MYSTERY DINNER:

Saturday, May 3, 2025 Club Roma

Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

Event begins at 6:30 p.m.

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

Maximum of 8 per table

Tickets may be purchased through e-transfer at events@serrastc.ca

For more information, please contact Deedee Alexandre at 905.732.4782

- Superintendent Forsyth-Sells shared that Dr. Jean Clinton, MD, Clinical Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences at McMaster University, division of Child Psychiatry will be presenting to Niagara Catholic parents about increasing parent/caregiver awareness and knowledge about problematic addictive behaviours among youth on **Monday, May 5, 2025 at 7:00 p.m., at Denis Morris Catholic High School**. Information about this parent engagement event will be shared with Catholic School Councils.

2 **SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee):** K. Timmins

Chair's report:

- There was a letter from Ottawa Catholic about the Special Ed funding from all SEAC committees to CODE. Ottawa board is asking for increasing in funding. Niagara Catholic used MACSE Survey for March (The Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) provides advice to the Minister of Education about: the development and delivery of programs and services for students with special education needs.) We can support the letter and include the survey.
- Director's Performance Appraisal
- Educational Awards of Distinction Meeting, C. Cipriano will announce at end of Feb.
- New Member of SEAC - Welcome Cindi Lee Eckert Flagg

Agency Reports:

- LDA of Niagara: World Down Syndrome Day on March 21st
- Bethesda: planning dates in March to host Michael Jacques - My First Book. Also Entry to School programs and family events for the month of March
- Community Living Welland/Pelham: Coordinators meeting with the City to talk about inclusivity of summer program to have more children have inclusive camping experiences.

Kate Bishop

- No report, will report next month

Staff Reports

- Adele: NIL
- Susy: All elementary schools are welcoming our incoming families in K. Many activities coming up - Kids Helping Kids campaigns.
- Student Support Department: 27th annual Kids Helping Kids Fundraiser. Transition time - secondary ERTs attended a meeting focused on grade 8 to 9 transitions. February PA Day topics - facilitate sessions on Epilepsy and Diabetes. Gifted Module update - Microbits. BT/LC/ND/STF FOS attended Snap Session. Second half will attend in the Spring.

Trustee Report

- Board Meeting and report prepared is on the website - the last year of everything happening at Niagara Catholic.

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

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

• **Invitation for Niagara Catholic schools to attend Team Canada Para Hockey Game**

Hockey Canada will host a series of Para Hockey games featuring Canada vs. USA. Canada is the reigning World Champion from 2024, while the United States earned the silver medal. Para Hockey is a sport for individuals with lower limb disabilities, played in a seated position in a sled, and a part of the Winter Paralympic Games Program.

This event not only highlights a different way to play Canada's game but also promotes awareness and appreciation for inclusivity and adaptive sports. Niagara Catholic schools have been invited to cheer on team Canada on Wednesday, March 26th at the Canada Games Park in St. Catharines. The game begins at 12:00pm. The spectator area is fully accessible.

April 2, 2025 – World Autism Day

What is “Celebrate the Spectrum”?

- Celebrate the Spectrum is an opportunity for positive action to provide spaces of support and advocacy for our diverse communities, while learning about autism and how we can all make our communities better and more inclusive places for autistic people.

There are so many fun ways to Celebrate the Spectrum on World Autism Day across Ontario. Find out how to get involved leading up to April 2, 2025, and throughout the month of April by visiting the website celebratethespectrum.com.

• **Who is Autism Ontario?**

Autism Ontario is the province's largest collective voice representing the autism community, supporting thousands of families across the province through its seven Regions, who provide committed and skilled expertise and guidance to their local communities. They provide information on autism, support autism research, implement programs and services for the autism community, and aim to support and advocate for all children, youth, and adults on the autism spectrum and their families across the province, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, religion, or gender identity. Visit autismontario.com for more information.

- [SEAC Website](#)

3 Catholic School Council Financial Report (unchanged from last meeting): K. Timmins

- Current balance of just over \$4000
 - Enough to cover 10-12 scholarships at grad of \$200 but we could adjust for inflation and bump this up to \$250.
- Krispy Kreme Donut Fundraiser proceeds of \$1263 added in ...thanks for organizing and the support.
- Cobb's Bread Fundraiser for DM Cares/Breakfast Program – closes tomorrow.
 - Will go towards Breakfast Program and DM Cares
- Possible support requests in the future:
 - Grad Breakfast
 - Other?

4 Principal's School Information Report: K. Timmins

Our secondary schools are hubs of learning and growth where we pride ourselves in developing the whole student in Mind, Body and Soul.

Soul:

- Deep connection with our parish priest who is right across the parking lot. Fr. Ronald is always available.
 - classroom visits,
 - prayer services
 - Fr. Ronald is a big sports fan and he regularly watches games and prays with teams.
- Full- time Chaplain to nourish the day to day needs of our community.
- Weekly Mass in our chapel.
- Monthly whole school masses in the church.
- Weekly prayer of the Rosary over the lunches.
- Shrove Tuesday/Ash Wednesday and Lent
- Choose Life Dinner
- Sacrament of Reconciliation offered at DM Feb 26 and Feb 27.
- Lenten Mass April 2
- Holy Week April 13 (Palm Sunday) to April 20 (Easter Sunday) – Ways of the Cross on Holy Thursday – Gr. 9 Drama Classes

Mind:

- NCDSB Skills Competition
 - Carpentry
 - Auto
 - Hairstyling
 - Aesthetics
 - Baking
 - Culinary
 - Horticulture
 - Animation
 - Beats Music
 - Skills Competition – 10 Medals: 6 Golds, 3 Silvers, 1 Bronze for DM!
- Black History Month – BHM Committee
 - Lezlie Harper/Pinball Clemons
 - Food Fest
 - Spoken Word, Step, Fashion Show
 - Canvas and Culture
 - Future Black Leaders Mentorship Program w/ Brock
- Student Vote – NDP sweep.
- Pink Shirt Day
- Kids Helping Kids Campaign – Niagara Children's Centre
- Report Cards
- Course Selection Process
 - Advanced Placement Courses
- Transition from Sem 1 to Sem 2
- PA Day - School Improvement, Supporting Social Emotional Needs of Our Students and Equity/Diversity Talk – BHM
- Exams
- EQAO Math/ OSSLT Spring Write
- SHSM Experiential Opportunities and Certifications

- Jr. Semi-formal
- Niagara Public Health Vaccination Clinics in All High Schools

Transition Events:

- Gr. 7 – Hockey Game Canada Games Park
- Gr. 8's – Visit DM for a drama performance – Radium Girls
- Gr. 8 Open House – Open the doors to all of our Feeder Students and School Families
- Family of Elementary Schools Basketball tournament Tomorrow at DM

Body:

Very Rich Co-Curricular Program:

- Winter Season for sports: boys' basketball, girls volleyball, rowing, hockey, curling, swimming, ski club all wrapped up
- Spring sports are ramping up : soccer, boys lacrosse, badminton, track and field, baseball, slow pitch.

Clubs:

- High Voltage Robotics – 2 silver medalsqualified for provincials.
 - Our Robotics team finished with two silver medals at their first two competitions (out of 30 teams) and have already qualified for Provincials.
- Reach, Art, Drama, Choir, Anime, Drumline, Band, WelPac, BioBuddies, Eco-Club, BHM, Prefects

Other:

- April 4th PA Day
- Lenten Mass April 2nd
- Parent Teacher Interviews – Thursday, April 24 (Mid-term Report Cards are available on April 23rd)
- Construction Update: We are in the end stages of completion of the high performance centre and rowing centre.

E. OAPCE REPORT: M. Vandervaat

OAPCE meeting on February 13, 2025:

- Dr Josephine Lombardi was the Guest Speaker
 - She talked about the Jubilee Year of Hope 2025
 - She reflected on the pain and suffering around the world – many struggling – year of hope is focussed on through scripture
 - Hope – rejoicing in hope and persevering in suffering – waiting in hope can be difficult – what are you waiting for – discouragement makes waiting hard – that is when hope comes into play
 - Every 50 years is a jubilee year – Pope said that we should have a jubilee year every 25 years. Many often go on a pilgrimage for a jubilee year. Some Pilgrimage destinations – Rome, Toronto, Montreal
 - She highlighted **hope as a source of strength and renewal**, drawing from **St. Paul's teachings** and **Pope Francis' message**: "*Hope does not disappoint.*"
- Survey going right now – OAPCE is surveying parents across the province to help advocate for parents in Catholic education and provide feedback to the Ministry of Education. Please encourage all parents in your school communities to participate and complete:
 - <https://oapce.org/>
 - About bullying awareness and prevention
 - About cyber security
 - Cellphone and vaping ban
 - Encourage schoolboard to share this with parents

- OAPCE can be followed on social media
 - Instagram @OAPCE85
 - X @OAPCEONTARIO
 - Facebook oapce85!
- Parent 2 Parent Press - [Parents 4 Parents – OAPCE-Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education](#)
- Link to March Newsletter: [March 2025 Newsletter](#)

OAPCE Updates

- It's the year of the Jubilee – www.jubilaeum2025.va/en.html (Jubilee of the World of Education: 31 October, 2025 to 2 November 2025)
- Skilled trades offer students high-paying, hands-on careers without university debt. Programs like **coop, apprenticeships, and SHSM** help them gain job-ready skills
- **Save the Date:**
 - **86TH Annual OAPCE Conference – Saturday May 24, 2025 in Niagara Falls**



Location: St. Michael's Catholic High School, Niagara Falls, ON



In Partnership With: NIAGARA FALLS NCDSB

Here is the website for OAPCE related activities. <https://niagara.oapce.org/>

F. STAFF REPORT: E. Farkas

Course Selection:

Course selections have taken place- grade 8 students were completed in December and grade 9 students were completed in January and then grades 10 and 11 were completed in February. All course selections have been completed. Student Services went out to individual classes and went over course selection information with students as well as showing students all of the information available in MyBlueprint and the NCVLE to support them researching information for post-secondary.

OSSLT:

The next writing of the OSSLT will be on April 8th and 9th. Students who need to complete this graduation requirement will be notified of the dates that they will write the assessment. We will then receive these results at the end of June.

Post-Secondary Applications:

Anyone who applied to College needs to make sure that they accept their offer by the end of April 2025. There is information on the NCVLE on how to accept an offer as well as on www.ontariocolleges.ca

Students who applied to University will need to make sure that they accept their offer by the end of May 2025. There is information on the NCVLE on how to accept an offer as well as on www.ouac.on.ca Another round of offers will go out in late April early May once the April midterm marks have been uploaded.

McCarthy's Uniform:

They do not do fittings for back to school. Their retail store is open Tuesday to Saturday every week. They are currently receiving all of their inventory for the back-to-school season and should be fully stock by June. Students can go any time to get their uniforms and leave with the product.

McCarthy's store is located at: 108 Granthan Ave. South Unit #1, Phone Number: 416-593-6900 or toll free: 1-800-668-8261

G. STUDENT REPORT:

- Junior Semi-formal was a success with a good turnout, going forward Semi-formal will be all grades combined.
- Student Council is currently running a spring themed spirit week (March 17-21) with lunch and over the announcements games.
- Student Council elections are approaching as we want to have next year's council decided on before the board wide Student Council Symposium, which is in early May.
- Student Council is starting to prepare and plan Colour Wars as our end of 2024-2025 Council event, it will be on May 23rd.

H. OLD BUSINESS: K. Timmins

- Krispy Kreme Donut Fundraiser raised \$1263. Thanks for the support of CSC!
- Cobb's Bread Fundraiser has been organized and will close tomorrow. These funds are separate from the CSC fund and money raised will go towards Breakfast Program and DM Cares. Thanks for the support!

I. NEW BUSINESS: NIL

J. AGENDA ITEMS – DISCUSSION FOR FUTURE MEETING: K. Timmins

K. Next Meeting:

- Tuesday May 27, 2025 - Final optional meeting. Proposal: Social Gathering?

L. CLOSING PRAYER: A. Natale

M. ADJOURNMENT : K. Timmins

- Meeting concluded