



NIAGARA CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**MINUTES OF THE  
SAINT MICHAEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING**

**March 6, 2024  
SAINT MICHAEL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Saint Michael Catholic School Council, held on March 6th at 6:00pm. The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Mary Karagiannis and Nancy Gauthier.

**A. ROUTINE MATTERS**

**1. Opening Prayer**

The opening prayer was led by Dahlia Brannigan.

**2. Roll Call**

<b>CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP</b>		<b>Present</b>	<b>Excused</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Principal/Vice-Principal	Lou Stranges (P), Monique Mastroianni (VP)	*		
Secretary/Treasurer	Gabriella Griffiths (Secretary)	*		
Chair	Mary Karagiannis	*		
Co-Chair(s)	Nancy Gauthier	*		
Teacher Representative	Mark Casburn	*		
Non-Teaching Representative	Dahlia Brannigan	*		
Student Representative	Francesca Cavezza, Paulina Labarta	*		
Parish Representative	Anna Racine	*		
Community Representative				
OAPCE Representative	Stehanie Wybrew		*	
<b>PARENT/GUARDIAN MEMBERS</b>				
Lidia Romeo			*	
Joanna Perri			*	
Isabell Camillo			*	
Zahara Begum Tamiz		*		
Amie Malvaso			*	
Laura Thomas			*	
Julia Alcaron				*

3. **Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by Gabriella Griffiths

Seconded by Anna Racine

**THAT** the Saint Michael Catholic School Council approve the Agenda of the Saint Michael Catholic High School Catholic School Council Meeting of Wednesday, March 6, 2024.

**CARRIED**

4. **Disclosure of Conflict Interest**

No disclosures of conflict of interest were declared with any items on the agenda.

5. **Approval of Minutes of the Saint Michael Catholic High School Catholic School Council Meeting of Wednesday, November 29, 2023.**

Moved by Anna Racine

Seconded by Nancy Gauthier

**THAT** Saint Michael Catholic High School Catholic School Council approve the Minutes of the Saint Michael Catholic High School Catholic School Council Meeting of Wednesday, November 29, 2023 as presented.

**CARRIED**

6. **Guest Speaker Feedback**

Mary received feedback from other parents that was positive. Mr. Stranges also received positive feedback from parents and students. Some disappointment about attendance but Mr. Stranges mentioned that other schools have similar issues with getting parents to attend. Hoping to continue to use the funds provided to us for guest speakers in future years. Given \$500 each year and can apply for an additional \$1000.

7. **Gala**

Being held on March 23rd. Starbucks gift basket being donated by the school on behalf of the STM Catholic School Council to add to the Silent Auction table. Mary will be attending. Tickets are on sale until March 21st if anyone is interested.

8. **Saint Michael CSC Bylaws 2023/24**

Sent by Mary to all members to review and provide feedback. Once approved they will be posted on Saint Michael Catholic High School's website.

**B. PRESENTATIONS**

**Chaplaincy Presentation:**

**Black History Month**

- Atrium decorated with balloons with the colours for BHM and banners
- Board set up in the center of the atrium depicting athletes, entertainers, inventors, past and present and also those who made an impact on our community locally, nationally and globally. Places of significance and historical value in the Niagara Region were displayed on the board as well.
- Morning music was played over the system by mostly black Canadian musicians and some American.

- Bio's were read in the morning announcements and this info. As well as that on the board were used in a Kahoot game on the last day of the month with one prize winner at each lunch period.
- Bracelets were sold in the Atrium with BHM coloured suckers for a loonie, each bracelet had an inspirational saying
- Chef introduced culturally black recipes/dishes in his culinary class
- Cosmo tuned their hair styling towards styles of braiding, skin and hair care for clients.
- The cut out of hands were done in the BHM colours and the our school community were invited to write their dreams and hopes for the future in the palms of the hands and all were place in a shape of a heart on our wellness board
- The board had a live speaker through a Zoom session on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion by Leela Madhava Rau (LMR Consulting)

### **Ash Wednesday Prayer Service**

- Mass outline followed with two sessions back to back
- Ashes were distributed during the service by staff and admin.

### **Holy Thursday**

- Mass outline followed with two sessions back to back
- Drama Classes will be depicting the stations of the cross as our Lenten season comes to the end with the glory of Easter

## **C. POLICIES FOR VETTING-FEEDBACK**

Mary sent latest policies for vetting to all members to provide feedback to the Board. Some concerns over new transportation guidelines. Based on provincial mandates. NCDSB and DSBN share the costs of transportation so since DSBN is changing its policy, NCDSB needs to change as well. Will affect a small group of students at Saint Michael's (approximates 45).

## **D. REPORTS**

### **Student Report (Francesca Cavezza, Paulina Labarta)**

- Christmas Countdown was very successful. Included: daily give-aways, lunch activities and spirit week.
- Door decorating and ornament making contest for staff and students to showcase creativity and festive spirit.
- Christmas assembly was very well received. Included: activities, games, bands, masked singer and videos presented.
- "Bear for your Boo" event in February included sending a bear shaped ring pop to your peers.
- STM Sweetheart Semi Formal was enjoyed by students. Many photos were shared to Instagram account.
- Jon Hansen presentation resonated well with students.
- Upcoming Events:  
MRC out of dress code day. Proceeds raised will be going to McMaster's Children's Hospital. As well, donations can be made through school cash online.  
St Patrick's Day give-away to classes.

Beechwood Doughnuts sale at lunch for \$4 each.

Elections happening in Mid April. Both new and old council members will be attending a leadership symposium to participate in team building activities and learn more about leadership. (Nomination forms handed out to parents to look at.)

Colour Wars taking place in early May. Including fun activities and an assembly.

STM Stampede planning taking place.

Building an outdoor seating/learning space. Students in the horticulture program at Niagara College offered it. Final meeting on design taking place later in March.

### **NCPIC Report (Laura Thomas, delivered by Mary Karagiannis)**

- Pathways to Success program discussed. Currently over 1200 students enrolled, over 400 in Health and Wellness sector. Suggested in that meeting to give information to grade 9 and 10 parents since most don't know about it. Mr. Casburn assumed that they were referring to the SHSM program. Information for that is shared through guidance and teaching staff to students who need assistance achieving their goals.
- Large upgrade in technology classes. Over \$300,000 spent on new equipment and safety training. Take Tech Initiative requiring students to take at least one tech class in grade 9 or 10 before graduating. Starting in September 2024.
- Duel Credit Program. Students have opportunity to get a high school and college credit in one. Transportation is provided to the college as well as textbooks. Currently have 12 students enrolled at Saint Michael.

### **Parish Rep Report (Anna Racine)**

- CWL had a Valentine basket raffle to raise funds
- Once a month coffee social after morning masses are continuing
- Knights hosted Shrove Tuesday pancake evening
- Season of Lent has begun
- Stations of the cross and mass every Friday evening
- Diocese Day of Reconciliation on March 16th
- Parish Reconciliation on March 20th
- Legion of Mary prayer group has formed
- Infant Baptism prep ongoing
- RCIA team is continuing to prepare their candidates to be received in the Church at the Easter Vigil
- Children's Liturgy Team preparing the children for a Good Friday Passion Play at the 11:00 Family Children's Service on Good Friday

### **Staff Report (Mark Casburn)**

- Junior Girls Curling lost in NCAA finals
- Boys Curling won NCAA title, lost in SOSSA Finals
- Junior Boys Basketball lost in NCAA Semifinals
- Senior Boys Basketball finished
- Swimming: A number of swimmers advanced to SOSSA, 1 Advanced to OFSAA
- Rowing 1st and 3rd in Senior Girls Indoor Rowing Competition
- Girls Hockey Won NCAA, Advanced to SOSSA on Tues March 5th
- Boys Hockey: Won NCAA, Advanced to SOSSA
- Junior Girls Volleyball lost in NCAA finals

- Senior Girls Volleyball lost in NCAA finals
- Specialist High Skills Major Awards: Bronze in Auto, Gold in Graphic Design, Bronze in 2D Animation, Bronze in Coding, Gold in Electronics, Gold and two Silvers in Hairstyling; Silver in Horticulture and Landscape, Gold in Fresh Beats
- Spring Sports have started including Junior Boys Soccer, Senior Boys Soccer, Varsity Girls Soccer, Boys and Girls Flag Football
- Clubs continue to thrive at Saint Michael. Current ones include: Wellness Club (Black History Month, Dog Therapy Tails, Kids Heling Kids Fundraiser), Key Club fundraiser for Birchway Niagara, Travel Club, School Reach, House Band, Film Club, Choir, Tech Crew, Eco Club, Mock Trial Team, Quebec Trip, Sweet Heart Semi Formal, French Competitions, Waterloo Math Contest, Book Club, Saint Michael Dance Team
- Special Education: Saint Michael will be hosting all schools at Heartland Forest on May 17th, 2024. We will be working with the Rec and Leadership Class to make this an amazing day for all Special Education Class students. A new initiative with LEARNSTYLE has started. These sessions will be in Assistive Technology and Reading Intervention.

### **Principal's Report**

As we approach the March Break and the spring weather, our Semester 2 classes and our co-curricular programs are well under way! As we all know, the last few months of the school year certainly come with excitement and anticipation.

On January 17th, 2024, STM hosted the Gr. 8 Open House. Despite the cold and wintery weather, the Open House was very well attended and the feedback was positive from our future Mustang families. So far, we have registered over 250 Gr. 8 students for next school year. Our Vice Principals and guidance staff will continue to register future Gr. 9 students over the next several months!

On Feb. 15th, STM hosted an Out of Uniform fundraiser that raised \$1100. \$500 was donated to the Kids Helping Kids fund and \$550 was donated to Toonies for Tuition fund. Pink Shirt Day was held on Feb. 28th. Pink Shirt Day was established to support an act of kindness that was initiated by group of young people who supported a student In Nova Scotia who was bullied because he wore a pink shirt to school in 2007. On the same day, we were fortunate to have speaker Jon Hansen present to our gr. 11 and 12 Mustangs. Just like he did for our Gr. 9 and 10 students, Jon inspired our students to unleash their greatness!

Our theatrical production of Alice culminated in performances from February 22nd through February 25th. Over 80 students/staff were involved in the production which included performances by both junior and senior casts! The students under the leadership of Mr. Ciolfi performed 2 evening shows per night and also performed to our junior classes of our feeder schools during the school day. Students performed "Alice" in the NTS (National Theatre School) Drama festival on Monday Feb 26th and on Friday, March 1st the students involved in the school play won 3 awards at the NTS Drama Festival Gala.

They won: Best visuals, best set design and best stage design

This is the time of year that we begin the planning process for the upcoming school year. Our student services department has been very busy in providing course and program information to all our current students as well as our future Gr. 8 students. Students have been meeting with our guidance counsellors for specific pathway information and students are now able to access the course selection information through MyBlueprint. Course selection for the 2024-25 school year will need to be completed by March 8, 2024. It is always a good idea to make contact with your child's guidance counsellor if you have any questions about diploma requirements or pathways as there are always changes filtering down from the Ministry of Education. For example, starting in 2024 (for Gr. 9 students), students will be required to earn at least one technology credit in Gr. 9 or 10.

Parents/guardians should have access to updated marks in the Parent Portal this week. Families are asked to reach out to classroom teachers if there are questions or concerns regarding progress. Semester 2 Midterm Reports will be available on the Parent Portal starting April 24th and our Parent – Teacher Conferences are scheduled for April 24th as well.

Graduation activities have been set and have been rolled out to our graduating students. The Graduation Retreats will be held on May 21st and 22nd and the Graduation Prom scheduled for May 23rd at John Michaels. The Graduation Mass will be held on June 12th. At the conclusion of the Mass, we will announce the Valedictorian and Salutatorian for the Class of 2024. The board has introduced a new Valedictorian selection process for this school year. This new process has been communicated to the graduating class. The Graduation Ceremony is scheduled for Wednesday, June 26th at the Central Community Center on York Road in St. Davids. The Graduation fee for families is set for \$110 which can be paid on school cash online by April 2, 2024.

We are happy to announce that the Niagara Catholic School board, Saint Michael CHS in partnership with the City of Niagara Falls and Niagara United Soccer Club working on a plan to bring a sports complex – including a turf field, cricket field, track and basketball/tennis courts to Saint Michael. This project is pending ministry approval and funding with the hopes of construction beginning in the Fall of 2024...stay tuned for more details.

#### **E. OAPCE REPORTS (Stephanie Wybrew, delivered by Gabriella Griffiths)**

There has only been two meetings this school year with the OAPCE. One in December and one in February.

At the February meeting, guest speaker Anthony Perrotta gave an informative presentation entitled “*A Parents Insight Exploring the Benefits and Drawbacks of ChatGPT and AI Technology.*” The presentation gave the benefits, such as personalized learning but also addressed the concerns that could arise such as privacy and plagiarism. (This presentation is available online to both parents and staff and I encourage you to take a few minutes and listen. It was quite eye-opening if you are unfamiliar with ChatGPT, as I was.)

The 85<sup>th</sup> OAPCE conference is being held on Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup>. I am unable to attend – if anyone is interested in going, please let me know and I can provide additional details. This years keynote speaker is Karl Subban - if you are a hockey fan, you might find his speech quite enjoyable.

#### **F. AGENDA ITEMS-DISCUSSION FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

- Incentive based fundraising through CSC: Possibly an out of dress code day for the top sellers. Mr. Stranges doesn't want fundraising incentives to interfere with the fundraising taking place within the school. We will discuss further at a future meeting.
- Year –end BBQ with feeder schools: Laura suggested this. Possibly just pizza or a pot luck. Can invite Parent Councils from feeder schools. Possibly just Grade 8 parents would be interested but we can invite all. Possible date would be our last meeting at the end of May. Good opportunity for parents to ask council members and staff questions about how Parent Council and Family operate. Mr. Stranges will send out invitations to principals of feeder schools sometime in May. Laura will create invitations and will take the lead on organizing this event. Plan to have the Family meeting first (at 6:00) and then invite parents to Council meeting at 7:00.
- Grad Bursaries: Parents have asked Mary about businesses donating towards bursaries. Nancy asked about how the process works. Mr. Stranges explained that letters go out to those who have provided bursaries the previous year to determine if they are still interested in providing a bursary for the current year. Other people interested in donating a bursary should contact the school, discuss the criteria they're looking for and then Mr. Stranges will have to approve. Graduation committee then decides who meets the criteria and gets awarded the bursary. Some donors wish to select the recipient themselves. In those cases, the graduation committee will provide the donors with prospective candidates to choose from.

- SHSM: Information is found under *Student Services* on the Saint Michael website. Special red seal on diploma. Includes a co-op so need to have it in mind in grade 9 or 10 so that there is space available in class schedules for the co-op. Some parents have reached out to Mary because they still don't know about it. Mr. Casburn mentioned that students get a lot of information and maybe don't relay it to their parents. He said he would talk to Mr. Manella about creating a graphic with the information to put on Instagram in hopes that more people will see it. Mr. Stranges that he has applied to get two more sectors: Construction and Health and Wellness. If approved, even more opportunities for students including co-ops and special trips/excursions.

**G. NEXT MEETING**

- May 29th @ 7:00pm (Possibly including pot luck with feeder schools)

**H. CLOSING PRAYER was led by Dahlia Brannigan**

**I. ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Gabriella Griffiths

Seconded by Anna Racine

**THAT** the March 6, 2024 meeting of the Saint Michael Catholic School Council be adjourned.

**CARRIED**

This meeting was adjourned at 7:10pm.