



**BRANT HALDIMAND NORFOLK
Catholic District School Board**

Minutes

Catholic Education Centre
322 Fairview Drive
Brantford, ON N3R 2X6

**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, May 19, 2026 – 1:00 pm
Catholic Education Centre or Microsoft Teams**

- Members:** Dennis Blake (Trustee), Melanie Caldwell (Contact Brant), Michelle Drake (Crossing All Bridges), Kerri Lomax (Principal, Elementary), Shannon Korber (Child and Family Services of Grand Erie), Judy McCaffrey (Lansdowne Children's Centre), Lauren Moulton (Woodview Mental Health and Autism Services),
- Regrets:** Simon Jennions (Community Living Brant), Patti Mitchell (Parent, County of Brant), Marilyn Noi (Autism Ontario), Jennifer Rudyk (Principal, Elementary), Tammy West (Haldimand Norfolk REACH)
- Resources:** Sandra DeDominicis (Vice-Principal of Inclusive and Special Education) and Phil Wilson (Superintendent of Education)
- Guests:** Rosanna Jaegar-Petrella (Department Head), Melissa Lancaster (Leadership Teacher), and 2 Leadership students
-

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Lauren Moulton welcomed the committee.

2. Land Acknowledgement

Superintendent Wilson read the board's land acknowledgement.

3. Opening Prayer

Sandra DeDominicis shared an opening prayer.

4. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Shannon Korber

Seconded by: Dennis Blake

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the agenda of the May 19, 2026, meeting.

Carried

5. Approval of the Minutes

Moved by: Dennis Blake

Seconded by: Melanie Caldwell

THAT the Special Education Advisory Committee approves the minutes of the April 21, 2026, meeting.

Carried

6. Correspondence – Nil

7. Special Education Prom

Assumption College School shared highlights from the Once Upon a Prom event held on April 24, 2026. The “Tri Spring Fling” was organized through the Leadership class with the goal of bringing students from all three high schools together in a fully inclusive, barrier-free event. The initiative focused on ensuring all students had access to everything needed to participate, regardless of financial circumstances, while fostering relationships between Leadership and Special Education students and inspiring similar community initiatives.

Students began planning the event in class by forming groups responsible for various components, including themes, decorations, and logistics for both indoor and outdoor spaces. The chosen theme for the event was The Castle. A large community dress drive resulted in the collection of more than 200 dresses, along with donations of shoes and jewellery. Media coverage from CTV News and Rogers Communications helped generate significant community support and awareness. Overall, the initiative raised more than \$5,500 in cash and material donations, including sponsorship of a photo booth.

The event was collaborative and cross-curricular, involving Culinary, Special Education, Construction, Physical Education, Art, Cosmetology, Educational Assistants, and Leadership students. Attendance included approximately 75 students and 36 parents/respite workers. The presentation emphasized that the event successfully created joy, friendship, fun, inclusivity, community, strength, and happiness, while providing a memorable evening for all involved.

8. Community Agency Updates

Melanie Caldwell

Contact Brant shared several updates, including a refresh of its social media presence to support a shift toward highlighting real people and real family experiences within the community. In April, Contact Brant participated in the Brant Community Healthcare System update regarding the new hospital serving Brantford and Brant County. Staff also participated in the Riverside Hub community engagement event focused on redesigning the new hub space. In addition, Welcome to Kindergarten events were held in partnership with the local school boards.

Shannon Korber

Child and Family Services of Grand Erie updated that the recognition of Child and Youth in Care Day is on May 14, 2026, and an upcoming all-staff recognition event scheduled for June 10, 2026. The organization is also currently seeking an Executive Director. In addition, it was shared that, through Shannon’s role, support has been provided to 229 youth attending 102 schools across 17 different school boards.

Michelle Drake

Crossing All Bridges updated that it’s summer camp program has officially launched for individuals aged 14 and older. The organization also offers a leisure camp designed to support individuals with mobility needs and other exceptionalities.

Kerri Lomax

Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board (BHNCDSB) schools provided updates regarding ongoing transition planning activities, including Welcome to Kindergarten events,

entry planning and school visits, and Grade 8 transition preparation for students moving to secondary school. Schools also shared updates related to the Ready, Set, Go program and noted a significant increase in the complexity of student needs being observed across the system.

Lauren Moulton

Woodview Mental Health and Autism Services shared updates regarding a new outdoor space currently being developed to support youth through a natural gathering and sensory-focused environment. Construction is expected to continue for approximately two to three weeks and will include six garden beds as part of the space. The organization also continues to offer cooking groups and participate in community initiatives and events. In addition, the Brantford Ducks for Duckfest event is scheduled to begin June 1, 2026, with the Duckfest event taking place July 11-12, 2026, in Brantford.

Judy McCaffrey

Lansdowne Children's Centre updated that the Rotary Classic Run is scheduled to take place on June 7, 2026.

9. Vice-Principal of Inclusive and Special Education and the Superintendent of Education

The Special Education Department provided several updates, including that Spectrum Abilities students have now been selected and a comprehensive transition plan has been developed to support students entering the program. Two current Special Education Resource Teachers will become the lead educators for the program. Readtopia professional development wrapped up on May 23, 2026, and Bridges Canada has requested permission to use BHNCDsB's implementation model and videos to support professional development with other boards. Approximately \$280,000 in sensory space funding was approved for schools across the system.

The Special Education team has finalized Educational Assistant allocation numbers for next year, and Educational Assistants recently received Preference of Placement Forms. A Community of Practice (COP) meeting was also held in May covering several Special Education initiatives and supports. The department continues to explore additional companies to support Crisis Intervention training opportunities.

Special Education staff also attended the Ontario Council of Administrators of Special Education Spring Symposium. It was shared that Glenn Thistle will be retiring at the end of the 2025–2026 school year, with Taryn O'Neill appointed to the consultant role beginning in the fall.

10. Closing Remarks/Adjournment

Lauren Moulton thanked everyone. The meeting adjourned at 2:08 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 16, 2026.