

Minutes of Catholic School Council

February 2, 2026 – 6:00 pm

Attendees:

Present: Helen Biggs, Kim Bevington, Cathy Blanchard, Stacy-Ann Brown, Debbie Cheretas, Christine Curtis, Sheila DeSousa, Chaplin Dunn, Melanie Facca; ND Staff Representative, Sunny Francis, Principal Mark Freeman, Danielle Good, Karla McRae, Marysia Papagianis, Alfredo Pulido, Kristen Runciman-Bentivegna; ND Staff Representative, Elizabeth Stepanic, Julie Tippet, Reannah VandenBerg, Tiffany Young,

Absent: Brian Aldwell, Vice-Principal Vanessa Aquilina, Vice-Principal Natalie Cook, Luke Lillicrop, Donna O'Connor, Naida Rahma

1. Opening:

Sheila welcomed everyone including new member Karla and Chaplin Dunn opened with prayer.

2. Student Update:

Principal Freeman reported on behalf of the students.

Upcoming Events

- **Match-amatics** fund raiser coming up.
- February 13 is a **PA day** followed by Family Day on the Monday.
- February 12, 2026, students are invited to **dress in red** and donations will be accepted for The United Way in conjunction with Paint the Town Red, if students want to donate. However, some of the money from the Paid Civies days will be donated to the United Way. Also hoping to do a popcorn fundraiser.
- February is **black history month**, and it will be recognized through different events.
- **Basketball tournament** coming up - 24 teams will participate.
- **Civies Day** on February 26 will be 90's themed.

Dances

There is no Valentine's dance scheduled for next Thursday night. The Fall Dance was ok, but there does not seem to be as much interest. The plan is to try different ways. The seniors have many events (graduation dinner, etc.). Perhaps next year have a fall semi-formal for seniors and a Spring Fling for the juniors and revamp October to be in line with the Show Case around Thanksgiving and have the Homecoming Dance at the same time. A silent dance (headphones with your own music or two DJ's you can tap into) was suggested as an option.

3. Principal Update:

Construction - Construction on the cosmetology department was delayed slightly due to permits but will start next month. Expecting an opening date of September 2026.

Enrolment - We have 1000 students now which makes us the smallest high school in Burlington at the moment, however we are still running all the events/programs as the larger schools due to the diligence of the ND staff. Parents requested to promote ND as much as they can. Semester 2 started today, with one new staff member, who is a former student of ND. Senior Administration to ask for sections in advance for next year which can be challenging due to enrolment or the amount of interest in a particular class.

Shorts By-Law - 2 weeks ago we had an emergency fire alarm. Many students were out in shorts which is deemed a health and safety issue. Principal Freeman asked if we could put a limit on when kids can wear shorts. Jackets on the back of chairs in -20-degree weather has already been implemented. A brief discussion followed and a motion was made.

MOTION: "starting next year (2026/2027 school year) as part of the uniform bylaws, shorts will not be worn from November 1st until the first Monday after March Break. Uniform pants must be worn during this time except for gym shorts". The motion passed unanimously. The athletic pants with the cuff seem to be popular and students can be steered towards those as an alternative.

Barber Program - Barber program is possible, depends on how much interest and if there can be a section for it. There is the possibility that it could be into the Cosmetology course and then it can build into an interest for males or females from there and see if it can be incorporated into the curriculum. Possibility to perhaps introduce it as a club. Principal Freeman to discuss this with the Cosmetology teacher.

Tech Bundle - some students did not get the bundle so some of the components were shifted as the interest was different, some were intermixed, but some of the intermixed did not work as some of the students were not interested so there was sometimes no way to offer it, so changes had to be made.

4. Budget Update:

Cathy reported that we have \$8,900.00. Still looking at the sound proofing curtain and the barbecue is in the air as they can run at \$10,000.00. Could we barrow barbecues from parents or other schools for events for the school and the staff. Having a barbecue is not pivotal to what we do, but it would be nice as this would also give ND the opportunity to have fundraisers. Karla runs and Airbnb and has some connections for some less expensively priced barbecues. Karla will do some homework to find a good quality, large barbecue at a good price. The new score board would be cost \$25,000. to \$30,000. for an entry level. This could be a separate fundraiser. The question was raised as to whether the current scoreboard could be repaired. Cathy also reiterated not to forget to earmark

some funds for the Business Leadership Conference and some of the other student lead projects

5. Chaplin Update:

- Religion classes were brought down to **mass** with the new Bishop.
- Tomorrow on ND TV Live there will be a **holocaust memorial presentation**.
- February 17 will be the **Mardi Gras Pancake Breakfast** from 7:45 to 8:20.
- 20 or so students from Irish Cares will go **L'Arche Community Living** in Hamilton to help with their Mardi Gras.
- On **Ash Wednesday** there will be one big liturgy for the school.
- Chaplin Dunn will be reposting the **Arts Camp**
- Chaplin Dunn also running day **retreats at Camp Rebuff**

6. Parish Reps Updates:

St Paul's

- Reannah sent the St. Paul's Parish **newsletter** to all members via email for reference.
- Chaplin Dunn added that St. Paul's is putting together a **video for their 40th** anniversary and is reaching out to any students who would like to record a prayer. Filming will take place at ND at the beginning of March.
- Chaplin Dunn also added that some of the Angel Campaign **funds** went to help families at Christmas with \$100.00 gift cards from Walmart. Chaplin Dunn asked for any funds that could help Irish Cares replenish the Irish Cares account. \$50.00 has been saved for the 30 families that are supported through Irish Cares at Easter.
- **Grad Mass** will be at St. Paul's on the Friday instead of Tuesday with the grad luncheon after also at St. Paul's

St. Gabriel's

Sunny reported that

- St. Gabriel's has upgraded the new **sound system** for the Parish, and it has the capability for hearing impaired to sync with the sound system directly.
- There is going to be a **fundraiser** for the Parish Hall Renovations on April 11th
- The **Filipino Choir** has been singing at masses once per month and also host a dinner after. Sheila added that the choir is amazing.
- Father Paul will be sharing a brief **church history** every week with the parish community.

7. OAPCE Update:

Alfredo reported that

- on November 10 there was a presentation at St. Ignatius of Loyola in Oakville about danger of **screen time** and how to reset.
- The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops are urging the government not to stop **religious expression** and doctrine.

- **Living Hope Presentation** is coming in February and is open to everyone.
- The **87th Annual Conference** at St. Francis of Xavier in Milton will be in April of 2026. Alfredo will send out an email when registration is open.

8. Fundraising Update:

Julie reported on:

New-to-You Sale - will be in the gym on April 9th on Parent/Teacher interview night. There will not be as much as the end of the year sale (mostly shirts). Method of payment will be Cash-on-line again. Help will be needed, maybe from Irish Cares. Pop-up-Prom donations/drop offs will all be received. Gym uniforms can also be donated.

Loot-in-the-Boot - scheduled for May 30th from 9am to 1pm with a rain date of June 6. Money will go to Irish Cares and the Angel Campaign. Julie requested that the cost for advertising and bathrooms. Advertisement for the vendors that wish to attend is the first step and anyone who was there last year will have first dibs. If anyone knows a baked goods/coffee vendor that would be welcome. Advertising will begin early.

9. New Business:

McCarthy Uniforms $\frac{3}{4}$ Zip Hoodie - Sample of a McCarthy's $\frac{3}{4}$ zip hoodie (\$55.00) was circulated. A **MOTION** was made by Principal Freeman to introduce the $\frac{3}{4}$ zip as an additional piece to be available from McCarthy's starting in September. A show of hands indicated that all are in favour. Motion carried. A second **MOTION** to remove the **rugby shirt** was made and after a show of hands the motion passed unanimously.

Parent Drop Off/Pick-Up - Still not running as smoothly as it could and can be dangerous at times. Principal Freeman to continue to send out email reminders. New signs for "No Entry" and "Through Traffic" will go up this Spring. A suggestion was made that students could be tasked with a video project to reinforce the written instructions. It was also noted that students are walking across the street by the bus stop without looking. Is it possible to remind them to be more vigilant or have a cross walk installed there?

Graduation 2026 - Graduation is organized by teachers/staff. Could Parent Council help out to ease the load on the staff? Decorating and moving items from venues for the ceremony and dinner/dance could easily provide assistance. Cathy and Karla would like to be put in contact with the Graduation Committee and Chaplin Dunn happy to be a part of it too. The Graduation Ceremony time will change to 3:00 pm this year. Parent Council takes care of the Prom Pop-Up. It was promoted last year, but not much was dropped off. Suggested to coordinate with Assumption and Corpus Christie, however it is tough to coordinate with the other schools on a project like this. Suggested that it become an Irish Cares thing. Suggested that we get the word out there and see what we collect. Sending

reminders right after the grade 11 illegal prom and/or after the grade 12 dinner dance may be effective.

Student Parking Lot Ploughing - It was noted that a number of students were stuck in the parking lot during exams. Principal Freeman to make sure the ploughing is done in a timely manner.

Fundraiser - Stacy-Ann is facilitating a fundraiser in conjunction with Black History Month and would like suggestions as to where the funds raised should go. Suggestions were hurricane relief in Jamaica, Food for Kids, United Way or replenish Irish Cares funds. Decision deferred. The fundraiser will be held February 24 to 26 and will be an all-inclusive/all welcome event of hair braiding and extensions with coffee and goodies available. Hoping to have donations set up on school-cash-online. Advertising will run up to April 9th Parent/Teacher interviews. More details to come.

STEAM Trip Proposal - Principal Dunn proposing to Parent Council to support a STEAM Math Leadership Retreat specific to this year's impressive grade 9 group. The STEAM teachers would like to do something to differentiate the program even more and maybe illicit more interest from the elementary schools. It would be a 2-night trip with possible options of Muskoka Woods or Teen Ranch in Orangeville. The average cost would be approximately \$300 plus tax per student for two days overnight plus bussing. This would be an additional \$100.00 per student. The cost cannot be too high to make attendance possible. So, the STEAM math teachers are asking for any funds that can be spared from Parent Council to offset some of the costs. It would only be open to grade 9 STEAM cohort at this time. Chaplin Dunn will put a proposal together including the numbers and send it to the Parent Council and a decision will be made from there. Debbie felt it was a good idea to promote the STEAM program and is willing to do a fundraiser.

10. Upcoming Meeting(s):

April 13, 2026 * June 8, 2026 - Year End Social

11. Motion to Adjourn and Closing

Sheila thanked all for attending. Stacy-Ann closed with prayer. Principal Freeman entreated all to drive safely.