



*Niagara Regional Report  
Summer 2026  
Director: Jennifer Pilzecker*

***Please find below a pre-summer report from OAPCE's Niagara Director Jennifer Pilzecker:***

*Director J. Pilzecker continues to monitor and respond to the Niagara OAPCE email account on a weekly basis providing ongoing support to parents and OAPCE representatives.*

*The 87<sup>th</sup> annual OAPCE Conference was held on April 17<sup>th</sup> in Mississauga and the conference highlights are now available at OAPCE.org or by clicking this [link](#).*

*OAPCE's **End of Year Report** was presented by OAPCE's Co-Executive Directors at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on June 1, 2026. The Report is available at OAPCE.org or by clicking this [link](#).*

*OAPCE's **Summer Newsletter** will be distributed at the end of June by email and is available now at OAPCE.org or by clicking this [link](#).*

*On June 11, 2026, J. Pilzecker attended the OAPCE Board of Directors Meeting.*

***Featured at the OAPCE June 1, 2026 meeting were the following guest speakers:***

***Bishop Yvan Mathieu - End of Year Reflection***

*Bishop Yvan Mathieu reflected on how, even after receiving the Holy Spirit, the disciples returned to hiding in fear until Jesus appeared once again and offered them peace rather than anger. His message reminded participants that moments of fear, discouragement, and uncertainty are a natural part of faith, and that we are called to invite Jesus into those moments for renewal and strength.*

*For Catholic parents and educators, Bishop Mathieu emphasized that nurturing and passing on the faith—especially to children—can often feel difficult and discouraging. He encouraged participants to remain spiritually “on fire” by relying not only on personal effort, but on the Holy Spirit, who works through us even when results are not immediately visible.*

*Using the image of a campfire, Bishop Mathieu described faith as something that can dim over time but can always be rekindled through prayer, Scripture, and openness to the Spirit. His reflection served as a meaningful reminder to persevere in faith, trust in the Holy Spirit, and remain confident that God continues to work through our everyday efforts.*

***Link Shared: [Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus](#)***

***WonderTree - the importance of emotional connection and support with our children***

*The WonderTree presentation focused on empowering parents and caregivers to support their children through emotional connection and understanding. Rooted in Emotion-Focused Family Therapy, the presentation introduced emotion coaching as an effective approach to helping children regulate emotions, build resilience, and strengthen relationships.*

*Presenters emphasized that emotions are not problems to be avoided, but important signals that guide behaviour and well-being. When children become emotionally overwhelmed, logical reasoning is often ineffective until they first feel calm, safe, and understood.*

*The key steps of emotion coaching shared during the presentation included:*

- *Attending and being fully present*

- Labeling emotions
- Validating feelings
- Meeting emotional needs
- Problem-solving after emotional regulation has occurred

*Special emphasis was placed on validation as the most important step. Parents and educators were encouraged to acknowledge and understand a child's emotional experience without dismissing or minimizing their feelings.*

*The presentation also highlighted that while all emotions are acceptable, behaviours can still be guided appropriately. Over time, this approach helps children develop emotional regulation skills, confidence, resilience, and stronger communication habits.*

*Participants were reminded that parents' own fears, past experiences, and self-doubt can impact how they respond to children emotionally. As a result, self-awareness and emotional regulation for adults are equally important.*

*These strategies were also identified as valuable tools for educators, as even brief moments of validation can help de-escalate situations and strengthen relationships within school communities.*

#### **Links Shared:**

1. [Resources](#) for Parents and Caregivers
2. [This blog](#) compliments the strategies being shared, focusing more on how to support mindfulness and regulation in kids at home and in school settings.
3. A [pdf](#) about parenting style animal models

#### **Niagara Director's Summer Message to Parents:**

*As another school year comes to a close, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to all NCDSB families for the ongoing support. OAPCE could not do what it does without your partnership and commitment to Catholic education throughout the year.*

*This year has been filled with opportunities for learning, growth, faith, and community. Whether through school events, Catholic School Council (aka Parent Council) involvement, volunteer efforts, or the daily support you provide at home, your contribution continues to strengthen our Catholic school communities.*

*This year has also brought change to the NCDSB with the recent departure of our Director of Education Camillo Cipriano with Giancarlo Vetrone stepping up to fulfill his duties for the final months of the school year. I would like to thank the Interim Director of Education for his service and also thank former Director Cipriano, the Trustees and senior staff of Niagara Catholic for their ongoing support during the 2025-2026 school year.*

*This summer, OAPCE encourages students to find opportunities to continue learning by reading regularly, exploring new interests, staying active, and spending time in prayer and reflection. If you haven't visited the parent resource section of the OAPCE website recently, I invite you to do so for ways to keep the students in your family engaged.*

*Thank you once again for being valued partners in Catholic education. I wish you a summer filled with joy, peace and laughter. I hope you find time to rest, reconnect, and enjoy meaningful moments together with your families. OAPCE and I pray that God continues to bless your homes with health, hope, and happiness.*

**Yours in Catholic Education,**

Jennifer Pilzecker  
Director, OAPCE Niagara